

A BRIEF PILGRIMAGE IN THE HOLY LAND



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By Caroline Hazard

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A BRIEF PILGRIMAGE
IN THE HOLY LAND





A BRIEF PILGRIMAGE IN THE HOLY LAND

RECORDED IN A SERIES
OF ADDRESSSES DELIVERED AT
WELLESLEY COLLEGE DURING
THE PAST SUMMER
BY THE FUGITIVE
CAROLINE HAZARD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM
ETCHINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS
BY THE AUTHOR



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
MOUNT HERMON
The Mount of Transfiguration

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A BRIEF PILGRIMAGE IN THE HOLY LAND

RECOUNTED IN A SERIES
OF ADDRESSES DELIVERED IN
WELLESLEY COLLEGE CHAPEL
BY THE PRESIDENT

CAROLINE HAZARD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM
SKETCHES AND PHOTOGRAPHS
BY THE AUTHOR



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
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1909

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Published October 1909

FOREWORD

THESE brief Sunday evening addresses are attempts to bring back to the College some of the wonderful experiences of a sabbatical year abroad. They record the doings and feelings of three crowded weeks,—weeks to color the whole of a lifetime. The circumstances under which this little journey was taken were peculiarly happy. Many women travelling alone in the East, even in this day, feel obliged to join a party and go under the auspices of one of the great tourist agencies. I am not an inexperienced traveller, having sailed both the Atlantic and the Pacific, and crossed our own continent more than a score of times. So I did not follow the usual plan. I had one companion, a dear and sympathetic friend, and an excellent trained nurse who had been with me in illness, and who for the sake of the experience was travelling as my maid. I found on the Nile just the dragoman I wanted,—a man whose likeness to the butler of my childhood seemed to establish a bond. He was a native of Assouan, a man of sixty, keen and clever, who had begun life with Professor Georg Ebers, and had some real knowledge of archæological treasures. We were thus an ideal party,—two ladies

FOREWORD

with an exceptionally clever man and woman to look after us,—free to go or stay as we chose, with no fixed date, except that we must be in Jerusalem for Easter.

So we landed under the shadow of Mt. Carmel, as some of my ancestors must have done, for the Crusaders' shell is the crest of my father's family. So we took our way over the flower-besprinkled plains. So we spent days beside the Sea of Galilee, and followed those blessed footsteps up to the feast at Jerusalem.

It has been my custom at Wellesley to conduct the evening service in the College Chapel two Sundays of each month, and at these services during the months immediately succeeding my return I endeavored to present some aspects of this pilgrimage. The music for each service was arranged to supplement the service, Mendelssohn's Elijah for Mt. Carmel, the Pastoral Symphony for the Plain of Sharon, Christmas music for Bethlehem. In publishing the addresses they must be shorn of a powerful adjunct. I can only hope they may give my readers a little of the joy of the actual experience. Wellesley ought to be a better college because its President has been on pilgrimage.

CAROLINE HAZARD.

October 15, 1909.

CONTENTS

Sonnet : <i>Mount Carmel</i>	
I. CARMEL BY THE SEA	3
Sonnet : <i>The Mount of Beatitudes</i>	
II. THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES	19
Sonnet : <i>The Sea of Galilee</i>	
III. THE SEA OF GALILEE	29
Sonnet : <i>Capernaum</i>	
IV. CAPERNAUM	41
Sonnet : "If God so clothe the Grass"	
V. THE PLAIN OF SHARON	53
Sonnet : <i>Joppa</i>	
VI. JOPPA	65
Sonnet : <i>Bethlehem</i>	
VII. BETHLEHEM	75

CONTENTS

Sonnet: Jericho

VIII. JERICHO	87
---------------	----

Sonnet: The Jordan

IX. THE JORDAN AND THE DEAD SEA	97
---------------------------------	----

Sonnet: The Wilderness

X. THE WILDERNESS	107
-------------------	-----

Sonnet: The Lament

XI. JERUSALEM — THE LAMENT	117
----------------------------	-----

Sonnet: Easter

XII. JERUSALEM — THE TRIUMPH	129
------------------------------	-----

ILLUSTRATIONS

MOUNT HERMON, THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION	(page 32) <i>Colored frontispiece</i>
THE BEACH OF ACRE WITH MOUNT CARMEL	8
THE MARKET AT ACRE	12
THE VIRGIN'S FOUNTAIN AT NAZARETH	20
THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES	24
TIBERIAS	30
A WEDDING PROCESSION IN TIBERIAS	36
THE SEA OF GALILEE, SHOWING ANCIENT FORTIFICATIONS (<i>colored</i>)	42
CHILDREN ON THE PLAIN OF SHARON	58
HOUSE OF SIMON THE TANNER	68
THE HUSBANDMAN AND HIS TOOLS	76
“HE GOETH BEFORE THEM, AND THE SHEEP FOLLOW HIM”	80

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE DEAD SEA, AND RUINS OF HEROD'S CASTLE (<i>colored</i>)	92
THE DRAGOMAN	98
THE HILL OF BLOOD (<i>colored</i>)	110
THE MOSQUE OF OMAR, ON MOUNT MORIAH, THE SITE OF THE TEMPLE	118
THE WALL OF WAILING	120
THE WALL OF WAILING, SHOWING HEBREW INSCRIPTIONS	122
THE OBEISANCE. A FATHER TEACHING HIS SON	130
IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE	136



CARMEL BY THE SEA



MOUNT CARMEL

LOW-BROWED, majestic, stretching out to sea,
The long, high level of Mount Carmel sweeps
Its giant crescent, guarding lucid deeps
Of shallow water on its northern lee,
Where restless waves are tossing light and free.
The beach lies at its foot; upon its steeps
Are caverns wild where still the jackal creeps,
While birds of prey still circle noiselessly.
Elijah dwelt here; here the priests of Baal
Invoked their god, the while the prophet fanned
Their zeal; here fire descended at his call.
And here Crusaders of a later day
And paladins and heroes took their way
To conquer for the Cross the Holy Land.

A BRIEF PILGRIMAGE IN THE HOLY LAND

I

CARMEL BY THE SEA

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice, even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. — **ISAIAH, xxxv: 1, 2.**

IN the beautiful springtime of the year we approached the Holy Land by way of the sea. Fortunately for us, although it seemed unfortunate at the moment, there was a heavy storm raging when we lay off Jaffa, which made it impossible to land. For three hours the ship was tossing on the waves, with the wind and rain beating upon it; and then finally steamed to the north, in despair of making the landing which would take us by the nearest way to Jerusalem. So it was late on the afternoon of March 20, 1907, that our good ship, the Prince Abbas,

finally stopped under the summit of Mt. Carmel, at the southern extremity of the Bay of Acre,—the bay toward which the Crusaders took their eager way, and the mountain which they hailed with solemn joy.

The sea was still raging, and one has to make the landing in a small boat, going down over the ship's side by a hanging flight of steps and being caught in the sturdy arms of sailors, when the little boat rises to meet the swing of the great ship. The landing itself has its terrors, especially on a stormy evening such as we had, when the boat rises and falls from eight to ten feet and you have to make your jump at the top of the wave to the perpendicular wharf, where there are only crevices between the stones to put your foot. But we finally landed in safety and walked along the rough wharf, with its sharp-cut stones, till in a moment we trod the soft, sandy soil of the country which from the time of Christ has always been called the Holy Land. Dark clouds were still over our heads, and the blue-gray mass of Mt. Carmel rose precipitously, its five hundred feet towering above us.

The next day the sun had come out, and we made an expedition to the top of the mountain.

Lovely trees grow about its base, and a well-engineered road winds up and around the face of the cliff. At the top is a great monastery, its foundation dating from the fifth century; and beyond, the long level stretch of the mountain-crest reaches out a distance of almost twelve miles. In ancient times this whole range was well wooded. "Though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence," the Lord declares by the mouth of the prophet Amos.¹ And in Isaiah's time there was evidently no lack of trees. Now it is bare and desolate,—a long, bold promontory overlooking the sea.

The Latin Carmelites reached Haifa in 1170, and some twenty-five years later became the rulers of that portion of the country. An Englishman, St. Simon Stock, of Kent, was their general in 1245. Afterwards they were massacred, but in the middle of the sixteenth century re-established themselves; and when Napoleon was besieging Acre, he used the monastery for a hospital. When Acre was taken, the old building was destroyed; but soon after, before the middle of the eighteenth century, the present splendid edifice was built. It faces the southwest, over-

¹ Amos, ix : 3.

looking the sea,—a long building of stone, two stories in height, the church in the middle and the monastic cells on each side. In the very heart of the church is a small cave, its rough walls still showing, which tradition points out as the cave in which Elijah sought shelter when Ahab was seeking his life. A little lower down, near the foot of the mountain, is the Cave of the Prophets, said to have been the one in which Obadiah hid “an hundred men of the Lord’s prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.” The monks will tell you that there has been religious worship in the first of these caves on the summit of Mt. Carmel continuously since the time of Elijah; that the sons of the prophets really dwelt there until the time of Christ, when they embraced Christianity. It was at the eastern end of this long ridge of Carmel that the prophets of Baal and Elijah met together. The whole description of the place corresponds exactly with what one sees now. And as I walked over the flower-besprinkled ground, I could not but remember with awe and wonder that dramatic scene.

“Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked,”

mocked the prophet, as the day declined, and the priests of Baal leaped upon the altar of their God. And at the time of the evening sacrifice Elijah came near, and said, “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant” . . . “Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.”¹

In the northern plain far below flows the brook Kishon, to which the prophets of Baal were taken after their defeat. One can fancy the concourse of people and the tumult and astonishment of that day. Now the mountain stands in lonely and desolate grandeur. Great blocks of flint and broken stone bestrew its top. At the season when we were there, lovely flowers grew in all the crevices of the rock,—the splendid anemone, purple and scarlet, great tufts of mignonette, the dainty cyclamen, with its leaves like silver shields; and there was the fresh shining of the new grass. It must always

¹ I Kings, xviii : 27, 36, 38, 39.

have been a wonderful place for flowers,—“the excellency of Carmel.” “Thine head upon thee is like Carmel,” the Song of Songs declares of the beloved. It runs far out into the sea, a place of strength and beauty.

There is another association with Mt. Carmel far more tender and charming than this story of wrath and punishment. After Elisha, the servant of Elijah, had been with his master to the very end, he journeyed up toward the north, from Jerusalem to Bethel, and then came to Mt. Carmel by the sea. You will remember the story of the Shunammite woman,¹ how as Elisha travelled backward and forward from his cave on Mt. Carmel and passed her house, she made him a little room into which he could turn for rest and refreshment. On the death of her son she took the child’s body to this prophet’s chamber and bade her servant saddle an ass, and they rode quickly toward Mt. Carmel. From the eminence of the mountain Elisha saw her afar off and “said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite. Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered, It

¹ 2 Kings, iv: 8-37.



THE BEACH OF ACRE WITH MOUNT CARMEL

is well. And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the Lord hath hid it from me and hath not told me. Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me? Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. And the mother of the child said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose and followed her."

You will remember the rest of the story,— how Elisha came to the house and went to his own little room and "shut the door upon them twain and prayed unto the Lord"; and after a while, when life returned to the dead body once more, he called the Shunammite, "And when she was come in unto him he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out."¹

¹ 2 Kings, iv: 25-37.

I can hardly tell you what it was, actually to stand upon a place full of such hallowed associations,—associations which become a part of one's very self, as these stories are a part of one's earliest childhood. You will sometimes hear people say that they are disappointed in the pilgrimage to the Holy Land; but if they are, I cannot but think that the fault is their own. They have not cultivated any sense of historical perspective; perhaps their experience has been limited, and they expect to find things in that far Eastern country as they would find them in their own home village in the New World. Things are very different: the women with their one garment of embroidered linen, covering them from the neck to the ankles, and a sort of shawl-like veil wrapped about the head and shoulders,—a most comfortable and picturesque dress; the men, in their flowing robes which almost amount to full skirts, and a coat that falls from the shoulders, often made of sheepskin. They are all different from anything we are accustomed to see. “The black tents of Kedar” are still pitched upon the northern slopes of Mt. Carmel,—low, wide tents, with doors so low that one must stoop to enter. That is the sort of tent that Jael invited Sisera to

enter ; and it was close beside the brook Kishon that her doughty but treacherous deed was accomplished. Here it was that Deborah came with Barak to the fight. You will remember Barak's faint-heartedness when he was told that he must lead the hosts of Israel. " If thou wilt go with me, then I will go ; but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go," he said to Deborah. And she replied, " I will surely go with thee, notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor, for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." ¹ And it was at the foot of this mountain that Deborah and Barak sang the song, — one of the most splendid poems of the Bible : —

" Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song :
Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of
Abinoam. . . .

The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the
river Kishon." ²

On the other side of Mt. Carmel lies the Plain of Sharon. As one stands upon the long ridge which makes its summit, to the west the great sea is lying ; to the north, the valley of

¹ Judges, iv : 8, 9.

² Judges, v : 12, 20, 21.

the brook Kishon, and Mt. Hermon in the distance; to the east, the mountains beyond Jordan,—Pisgah and Nebo; and to the south the splendid Plain of Sharon. It is a true entrance to the Holy Land. This way the Crusaders came, fired by enthusiasm to reconquer the land for believers in Christ. Just across the bay, of which Mt. Carmel forms the southern boundary, lies the city of Acre, where Richard Cœur-de-Lion and his hosts landed. It is still a mediæval town, with its double wall and its one gate, for it lies on the promontory jutting into the sea. We drove and walked along that noble beach, fording the Kishon as it rushes to the sea. Close behind us came a long string of camels, one supercilious beast following after another in soft-footed silence. Just outside the gate, the caravans had gathered, and some fifty camels were sitting crouched on their haunches in a solemn circle under the olive trees, while one tall haughty creature stood alone, as if making some profound oration.

Inside the gate was the crowded Oriental life. A narrow way runs through the middle of the streets, sunk about three or four feet below the sidewalk. There is barely room in it for the donkeys to jostle past one another, and horses



THE MARKET AT ACRE

and camels pick their steps over its uneven stones. It was market-day, and the place was full of sellers of sweatmeats and strong with odors of savory broths. There were the round flat loaves of bread, baked on both sides, perhaps two inches thick, the same sort of which Jesus inquired, "How many loaves have ye?" Ornaments and leather-work were displayed in lavish profusion; leather belts and whips, and bridles for both camels and asses were shown in great variety. All the activities of a mediæval town were being carried on. It made a strange contrast from the silence and solemnity of that mountain upon which holy men had lived, to the bustle and confusion of a Mohammedan town. And in spite of the intense interest of that strange city, with its novel methods of life, it was a relief to reach the sea once more, and to walk that beautiful shell-strewn beach from which the Crusaders brought their pilgrim shells, and to look with reverent eyes upon the "Excellency of Carmel." For us, it was the gate of promise, and the days which followed these first days by the sea are forever memorable.

After that overthrow of the prophets of Baal, for many many years there was said to be no temple or image, but only an altar upon the top

of Mt. Carmel. Tacitus speaks of it, and Pliny says that Carmel was the name of the shrine and of the god. It was the place which typified the purest religion, which showed the conception of an omnipresent and omnipotent God who is without form and substance, but a God who speaks to the heart of each of His children. A mountain is the most permanent thing in the world, its head uplifted toward the sky. In the midst of his desolation the prophet Jeremiah had a message of hope from this holy hill. The cry of the soul is for the direct message, for the open way. Holy men were always foretelling the time when the Revealer would appear. "As I live, saith the King, whose name is The Lord of hosts, Surely as Tabor is among the mountains and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come."¹

Let us pray:—

O Thou who art without form or similitude, who art not in the raging wind, or in the fierce fire, speak to us with the still small voice each listening soul may hear. We rejoice O Lord that Thou dost never leave Thyself without a witness, that Carmel and Tabor are perpetual reminders of the ancient days of Thy glory, which

¹ Jeremiah, xlvi : 18.

our eyes may see, and our minds reverently contemplate. But far beyond the external may we penetrate to the indwelling Spirit,—the spirit of pure worship, of perfect consecration which there was manifest. We come to raise an altar of our own hearts to Thee. Descend, we beseech Thee, and touch our souls with divine fire.

AMEN.



THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES



THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES

AN upland plain, with sandy soil and bare ;
Tall tufts of grass start from the barren ground
And branching bushes; scattered all around
Are jagged rocks to form a shelter where
The foxes still have holes and make their lair ;
While birds of prey up in the blue profound
Of lambent sky are circling o'er the mound
Twin-crested, basking in the springtime air.
It was upon that sun-crowned little hill
Beneath the Syrian sky the Master spoke
Such blessed words that they are living still ;
“ I have compassion on the multitude ; ”
And while He blessed and gave them mortal food
The everlasting bread for them He broke.

II

THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. — MATTHEW, v: 3.

FROM our earliest infancy have we heard these opening words of the Magna Charta of Christianity. The Beatitudes have been part of our mental furniture. We have heard sermons on each one. We all would say that we know the Sermon on the Mount; and yet when I saw that Mount itself on a spring afternoon, not very long ago, the whole scene took on new meaning. It was as if that verdant plain, and that lovely hill, held echoes of the Master's voice. One heard afresh His holy words,—“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Awakened by the wonder of it all, for us a veil had fallen, and for one transcendent moment that Beatitude was fulfilled.

Let me try to tell you about it, inadequate as words must be.

We had spent the night in the lovely hill town of Nazareth, climbing up to it from Haifa by the

sea, a drive of some twenty miles. The river Kishon was crossed, and before very long the low meadows of the sea level were left behind, and the hill country began. Nazareth is set in an amphitheatre of hills, facing south, its streets running in terraces following the contour of the hillsides. One is taken to the Church of the Annunciation, built over a small cave where the Virgin was supposed to be when the Angel came. The building is an elaborate florid structure, and the house they call the Virgin's has a very modern appearance. The place of real interest is the Fountain of the Virgin, a spring of living water from which all the town takes its supply. Here Mary must have come carrying her water-jar, just as the women do to-day. Here perhaps the baby Jesus came, strapped to his mother's back, as one sees small children now. The water ever flowing, ever renewed, a constant stream but never the same, is the one unchanging memorial of the days of Christ.

As we left the city the road wound up the hill, climbing higher and higher till at last the whole country north and south lay spread before us. This is "the brow of the hill whereon their city was built," to which they led Jesus "to cast him

THE VIRGIN'S FOUNTAIN AT NAZARETH



down headlong.”¹ There was the Mediterranean to the left, and the great fertile plain along its border at our feet. Blocking the northern view rose Mt. Hermon, white, majestic, a dome of dazzling snow crowning the fir-clad slopes, and we remembered that “The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted.”² To the east rose the mountains beyond Jordan, the country of Moab. It is a view His boyish eyes must often have gazed upon, for here He lived till He began to be about thirty years old.

The road wound on through Cana,—Kefr Kenna, as its modern name is called. Here was the first miracle, and here is the well, with the spring still flowing from which the water was brought at the marriage in Cana.³ Here are the women gathered around it stopping to talk a while, as the great “water-pots of stone” are slowly filled. One walks in the midst of sacred associations; time turns back,—there is no beginning or end. Nathanael lived here,—the “Israelite in whom was no guile.” Cana is only a little distance from Nazareth, an easy walk from the home of Jesus. This was a part of His own province, where He said in the days

¹ Luke, iv: 29. ² Psalm civ: 16. ³ John, ii: 7.

of His ministry that a prophet was held in honor except in his own country, and in his own house.¹

After leaving the village came a long stretch of plain, with an apology for a road winding over it. At last even the dirt road was lost, and the wagon jolted over rough fields sometimes ploughed for the spring sowing. We rattled over half broken-down stone walls, and into and out of ditches from two to three feet deep. Our drive was not to become monotonous, for after all these experiences, in trying to take a ditch at an angle we stuck fast and stayed for an hour or more. A shepherd with a fleece over his shoulders came to our help, and finally we were on our way again, always going toward the Sea of Galilee. It was a lovely spring day, with pleasant sunshine; flowers were blooming about us,—the anemone in scarlet, which is supposed to be the lily of the field, which Solomon in all his glory could not equal. Wild mignonette and cyclamen were blooming; blue mints flowed in azure spikes; the grass was gay with lovely bloom.

And then as we went on, feeling that this was indeed holy ground, on our left we saw a hill of

¹ Matthew, xiii : 57.

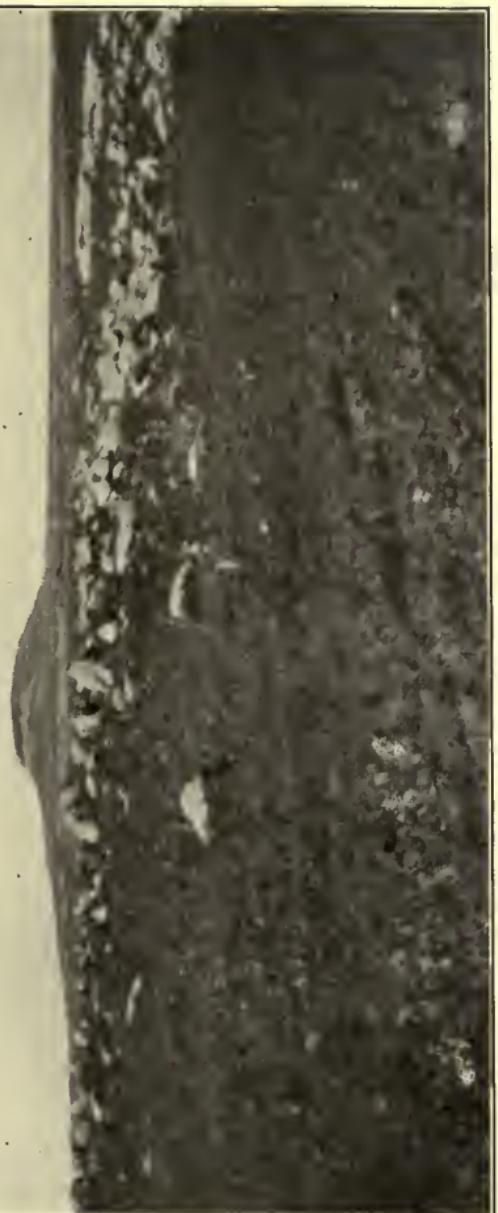
curious shape, a round green hill, with a flat top, having two little peaks at the outer edge. Karn Hattin, it is called,—the Horns of Hattin. Across the grassy, flowered plain we saw it, rising scarcely sixty feet;—what we should call a “sugar-loaf” or “Drumlin.” The top is level except for a hollow in it, a hollow quite large enough to hold the multitude who came to hear,—large enough to let the people sit down by companies of fifty and a hundred, when the five thousand were fed; for this is believed to be the place, not only of the preaching, but of the feeding of the people. Was it not like our blessed Lord to think of the bodily wants of His hearers? “I have compassion on the multitude,” He says, “because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat”;¹ and this place was the place where He blessed the loaves, and the disciples distributed to the hungry thousands. And I, that speak to you, saw it! It is not something far away, in almost another world, but a little hill, green and tender, a gently swelling mound, rising from a level plain;—just a hill like any hill, and yet a hill which transcends all others, for here He sat and taught, here He uttered those words which haunt our memory, here

¹ Mark, viii : 2.

He who is the Light of the World let His light shine!

A little later we saw it again from the Sea of Galilee. This lovely lake lies about seven hundred feet below sea level, so that from the surface of the lake all the hills about acquire height. This mound, which rises less than a hundred feet above the plain, thus becomes a mountain nearly a thousand feet high. A narrow ravine, the Valley of Doves, leads to it, from the border of the lake. A fishing boat could approach very near its base. Jesus could easily go "up into a mountain" from the water. When the multitudes thronged Him, it seems to have been this mountain to which He turned for quiet. "And when he had sent the multitudes away he went up into a mountain to pray," St. Matthew says, and St. Luke in relating a similar experience adds, "he . . . continued all night in prayer to God." This was on the night before He chose the twelve Apostles. Here He was, perhaps, when the storm came up, and He saw His disciples tossed with the waves, and "went to them walking on the sea." From one side of the mountain He could plainly see the lake, and He knew the force of that contrary wind. In His time many villages flourished on the borders of

THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES



the lake. Multitudes came to Him “from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.”¹ Now it is a desolate country. The villages are few and far between. The cities of Galilee, Capernaum, Bethsaida and Magdala are gone; only ruins remain. But the mountain is there; the hills He loved are the same; the flowers He knew still bloom. It is His country, glorified by His life, and made vital by His remembrance. One realizes as never before that He was what He loved to call Himself,—the Son of Man; that He was “tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.”

It is the poor in spirit, He declares, who are truly rich, “for theirs is the kingdom of God.” The old barriers fall, old distinctions are gone. And for His sake the land is a Holy Land. His blessed eyes beheld it, His feet trod its springtime freshness. And as He came to show us the Father, so the land shows us Him, in His humanity, in the splendid realization that humanity and divinity can be united. One loves the land for His sake, one loves the grass, one loves the flowers, because here He came, that we might have Life.

¹ Matthew, iv : 25.

Let us pray :—

O Thou who dost clothe the grass in beauty, we come to Thee to be clothed upon, knowing that Thou wilt clothe us with power and might if we come to Thee with a living faith. We cannot comprehend, dear Lord, how Thou dost work Thy wonders, but we come with believing hearts, knowing that Thou hast manifested Thyself, knowing that to the pure in heart Thou wilt reveal Thyself. Give us the pure hearts, we pray Thee, that we may walk with the open vision. We cry to Thee, as did the blind men of old, desiring to see. Teach us that Thy glory is all about us,—that Thy throne is not afar off, but may be in our inmost hearts. Come to us, dear Lord, in this freshness of the year, and shed upon us the perpetual dew of Thy blessing, — for Christ's sake. AMEN.



THE SEA OF GALILEE



THE SEA OF GALILEE

SWEET waters, whose serene and limpid wave
Upheld the pulpit from which words were said
To outlast time ; on whose banks feasts were spread
Which to the soul an unknown vigor gave—
You did obey, when storms began to rave,
The “ Peace, be still,” and each foam-crested head
Became like solid oak beneath that tread
Which bore embodied love, and power to save.
The mountains mirror their fair heights in thee ;
Upon their slopes His blessed footsteps trod
Whom multitudes went to the wilds to see,
And to be fed with bread come down from heaven.
From thee went out the Spirit’s mighty leaven,
For here was manifest the Son of God.

III

THE SEA OF GALILEE

And he arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. — MARK, iv : 39.

I WANT you to think of a soft spring day, with green grass all about,—short tufts, not like that of our fertile meadows, but grass coming up in little bunches and clumps and intermingled with most beautiful flowers: the splendid scarlet anemone in three varieties, cyclamen, various larkspurs, and blue-eyed veronica, golden buttercups, and daisies, all sprinkled through it,—a most enchanting variegated carpet of flowers.

It is a lovely country to drive over, with the Mount of Beatitudes rising like what we call a sugar-loaf hill to the left hand, and Mount Tabor, with a dome-like rise, to the right. On and on the horses stumble in the miry road. And presently there is a cleft in this open table-land, and looking far down is the silver gleam of the Lake of Galilee. What associations clus-

ter about it under all its names! The Sea of Galilee, the evangelists are fond of calling it; the Sea of Chinnereth or of Chinneroth it is called in the Old Testament, and the Lake of Gennesaret in the New; and, in honor of the Roman Emperor, the Sea of Tiberias. We associate with our English word "sea" the idea of immensity; but you must think of it more as the Germans use the word "*See.*" We have the Sea of the Four Cantons, or the Sea of Zurich, among the Swiss lakes with German names; and this beautiful sea is not half as large as either of those. It is another illustration of the truth that it is not physical size which influences the world, for spiritual forces are quite independent of territorial extent. It is only twelve and a quarter miles long, and at the widest scarcely seven miles, pear-shaped, wider at the north and narrowing toward the south. Many of our own New England lakes are far larger, and yet no lake in the world can be so precious.

As we first looked down from the plain high above it, it lay a wonderful expanse of brightness, a shield of silver and blue, set among the springtime hills, while just across rose the country of the Gadarenes, lovely pale green hills,



TIBERIAS



sloping sharply down, just as we began to find we had to descend; for the lake lies six hundred and eighty feet below the Mediterranean and more than eight hundred feet below the plain over which we had taken our way. So it was a steep descent, and the road wound down and down by ravines and broad masses of volcanic rock, black and grim, sharply defined in the lovely verdure. Down and down wound the road, with the City of Tiberias always in plain sight as the goal of the long way across the plain. It had been cool and fresh in the late afternoon breeze upon the upland, and became warmer as we descended. The masses of low brown buildings took shape, the hills on the opposite shore grew higher, and the day's journey ended at the city gate.

It is still a walled town, the walls in places broken and almost obliterated; but there is a beautiful arch through which the road enters, and just beside it a good little inn kept by a devout German, who has lived here some twenty years. We scarcely stopped to see our rooms, but hurried immediately to the shore of the lake, and stood upon the sandy beach, strewn with tiny shells, and plunged our hands into the most sacred waters of the world.

It was an enchanting evening: the sinking sun was shining full on the opposite hills, and clothing them with a softened glory. At the north, the snowy dome of Hermon took on lovely rosy lights, while a stratum of dark purple cloud lower than the summit seemed to lift it far up into the empyrean. As the sun sank, and purple shadows fell upon the waters, the light climbed on the hills until the snows of Hermon were left in celestial glory; and we remembered it was upon this mount that "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light."¹

The water of the lake is wonderfully clear, like Alpine water, and of a soft opal greenish color. It is over a hundred feet deep, and the greatest depth is supposed to be one hundred and forty-eight feet. Mountains that rise from its surface continue their descent below its waters; and it fills the deep ravine cut among the hills. The temperature of the water is warmer than that of the Swiss lakes, which are fed by mountain streams coming from glacial sources. As the level of the Sea of Galilee is below the ocean, the heat of the sun makes some difference; but it is also fed by springs of volcanic

¹ Matthew, xvii: 2.

origin,— very hot springs some of them, with a temperature of one hundred and thirty degrees,— which rise from the bottom of the lake. The water is said to be at a temperature of about sixty-eight at the surface, and at a depth of sixty-five feet has fallen less than ten degrees, owing to these warm sources of supply. The fish are still famous and abundant, some of them of the same varieties that are found in the Nile. How this happens is one of the many problems this wonderful country presents!

The boats are still there,— the fishermen's boats that our Lord used for His pulpit, and in which He found refuge in the crowded days of His ministry. They are heavily built, and clumsy, between thirty and forty feet long, looking like overgrown rowboats, as one first sees them. There is a short, stout mast in the bow of each boat, which can be unshipped by a couple of men at a moment's notice, and across this mast the lateen sail is rigged. We had the happiness of being in a boat under both conditions: when it was simply a rowboat, and each man stood to his oar and swung backward and forward with a low chant; and then again when a stiff breeze was blowing, and the waves dashed against the

side of the boat and flung their spray high up against the sail. One could see that it would be dangerous to try to cross the lake at such a time, and we hugged the shore and kept close to the protecting hills of the western bank. The lake is so narrow and the mountains so high that when the wind blows from the north it sweeps down through a ravine and lashes the waves into a wild fury. We had sunshine and a mild sky with our strong breeze, and so had only the delight and joy of the rapid motion; but when the thunders roll and "He commandeth and raiseth a stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof," then indeed one could see how terrible would be the fury of the lake in the wrath of the elements. Did the Psalmist have this lake in mind when he wrote the earthquake Psalm,— the 114th: "Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, which turneth the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters"?

The Jordan enters at the north, having its sources on the slopes of Mt. Hermon, but running through a low marshy plain, on which wild boar are abundant. It enters a turbid, muddy stream, polluting the limpid waters of the lake for some distance; and it leaves it clear as crystal, a rushing torrent at the southern end.

One cannot understand the Gospel till one knows something of this beautiful Sea of Galilee. For here that blessed life was lived; on these shores words were said which have governed the world. It was when He saw Peter and Andrew casting a net into the sea that Jesus called them to become fishers of men. The sons of Zebedee lived here, and left the ship and their father to follow Him.¹ Bethsaida, Magdala, and Capernaum are all upon its shores. The people pressed about Him as they press upon strangers to this day. As I sat sketching on the shore, a troop of released school-children came thronging about me,—not standing quietly behind to watch the work, as many California children have done, but pressing close, so that I could see nothing but eager, childish faces, and the tiny puppy which one little fellow held up within a yard of me in his anxiety to have the little dog included in the sketch. The people must have crowded Jesus in just that way when “there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.”² And then He taught them of the Kingdom of Heaven. These waters heard the parable of the sower,

¹ Matthew, iv : 19, 21.

² Mark, iv : 1.

and of the grain of mustard seed; "and with many such parables spake he the Word unto them," St. Mark says.¹ After the long hours of teaching, when the even was come, "they took him even as he was,"² and crossed the lake.

"And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship so that it was now full." "Carest thou not that we perish?" they cried, awaking Him from sleep; and it was these waters that heard and obeyed the "Peace, be still!"³

The nights of preparation were spent upon the borders of this lake. He went into a mountain, we are told, "and continued all night in prayer to God." What vigils it has seen! After the feeding of the five thousand upon its banks, Jesus "constrained his disciples to get into a ship and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitude away"; and then "he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come he was there alone." Then St. Matthew describes the storm, how the ship was "in the midst of the sea, tossed with the waves, for the wind was contrary. And in the

¹ Mark, iv : 33.

² Mark, iv : 36.

³ Mark, iv : 37-39.

A WEDDING PROCESSION IN TIBERIAS



fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea." One can picture their fright and astonishment as they "cried out for fear," and the assurance which that blessed voice brought them straightway: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."¹

And it was here after the resurrection Jesus had the meeting with Peter,—Peter who had denied Him, who, when he saw Him standing on the Plain of Gennesaret, "girt his fisher's coat about him, and cast himself into the sea,"² to hasten to Him. Here that searching question was three times repeated: "Lovest thou me?" And Peter answered with tears, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." And the blessed voice replied in tones that must have pierced the heart, "Feed my sheep."³ Truly these mountains and this water have heard words which have moved the world. Men have come and gone, but the lake lies embosomed in its hills, serene, with emerald and amethyst lights gleaming in its depths. In peace and in storm it is His lake,—the background of the Gospel history,—a part of His human life, whose limpid waters still hold the echoes

¹ Matthew, iv: 22, 27.

² John, xxi: 7.

³ John, xxi: 17.

of that voice which says to every troubled soul,
“Peace, be still.”

Let us pray:—

Our Heavenly Father, we come to Thee to have our tempests stilled; to hear Thy voice brooding upon the waters. In silence and in worship we come. Do Thou look into the depths of our souls; may they be limpid and pure, for Thy Spirit to penetrate. May we open our hearts, O Lord, that they may reflect something of Thy glory. Touch us each with a sense of Thy presence; renew us with the streams of Thy grace, and bathe us in Thine ineffable light. For Jesus' sake. AMEN.



CAPERNAUM



CAPERNAUM

I STOOD among the heaps of broken stones
Once capital and pillar, on the floor
Of the centurions' synagogue; the door
Through which the Master and His chosen ones
Must oft have passed is here; and here the groans
Of sick folk sounded, as diseased and sore
Men brought them to the street to lay before
That blessed Presence, Who could still all moans.—
This was His home, the blue lake's diadem;
Here was the ruler's daughter raised; here came
The woman who but touched His garment's hem.
Now desolation reigns; the sun beats down
Upon the remnants of that ancient town
Which lives but in the glory of His name.

IV

CAPERNAUM

I am the living bread which came down from heaven ; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. — JOHN, vi : 51.

THIS most profound and mystical of all the discourses of our blessed Lord we have all regarded with reverent awe. It is as if He wrested language from its purpose, and to enforce His meaning used so startling a metaphor that it seized and horrified His hearers. And then when they questioned, and could not understand, one can think of Him almost scornfully exclaiming, “The flesh profiteth nothing ; it is the spirit which quickeneth ; the words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”¹

The devout of all Christian centuries have found their inspiration and sustainment in this discourse. Divines and theologians have sought to explain it. It touches upon the deepest mysteries, the very springs and sources of life ; upon

¹ John, vi : 63.

the union of this mortal and immortality, of this human with the divine.

The place where such words were said must have a peculiar sacredness. We are so held by the power of the discourse that its circumstances of time and place escape us. "These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum."¹ Let us consider the setting of this precious jewel of truth.

It was a beautiful day when we set out from Tiberias, in a great fishing-boat, for the northern end of the Lake of Galilee, to visit the site of the ancient town to which Jesus came, after they had led Him to the brow of the Hill of Nazareth — the place of His bringing-up — and had thrust Him out of the city. Then He walked over these Galilean hills and came down to the borders of the lake itself. It is a veritable paradise in springtime. There is a famous passage from Josephus, which is often quoted: "One may call this place the 'ambition of nature,'" he says, "when it forces those plants that are natural enemies one to another to agree together, it is a happy combination of the seasons, as if every one of them had a claim in this country; for it not only nourishes different sorts

¹ John, vi : 59.



THE SEA OF GALILEE, SHOWING ANCIENT FORTIFICATIONS

The vision of this mortal and immortals, of this human and the other.

The place where such words were said must have a peculiar significance. We are as bold for the power of the thoughts that the vicissitudes of time and place may prove us. "These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum." Let us consider the setting of this precious jewel of truth.

It was about this time we set out from Tiberias, in a great Babylonian, for the neighborhood of the Lake of Galilee, to visit the site of the ancient city to which Jesus came, after they had left Him to the town of the Huns of Nazareth — the place of His bringing-up — and had chosen Him out of the city. Then He walked over these Galilean hills and down to the borders of the lake itself. It is a suitable paradise in springtime. There is a famous passage from Josephus, which is often quoted, "One may call this place the "ambition of nature," he says, "where it seems no effort that any natural creation can do another to agree together, it is a happy combination of the several advantages of the world; a place in another country; for it most exceeds all other different sorts



of autumnal fruits beyond man's expectation, but preserves them also a great while. It supplies man with the principal fruits, with grapes and figs continually during ten months of the year, and the rest of the fruits as they become ripe together through the whole year. For besides the good temperature of the air, it is also watered by a most fertile fountain. The people of the country call it Capharnum."

As one rows north on the waters of the lake from Tiberias, the western border retreats, making a bay forming the body of a lute, which is one derivation of the name of the lake. Kinnor is the ancient name of the musical instrument, and the name Gennesaret is supposed to have been a corruption of Kinneret, derived from this name. The shape of the lake certainly suggests a resemblance.

Just around the promontory which marks the swell of this silver lute lying among its hills is the Valley of Doves, a narrow passage between hills leading immediately up to the Horns of Hattin,—the Mount of Beatitudes,—which on the lake side descends steeply to the water. Here it was that our Saviour could seek the solitude that His soul craved in His busy days of ministry, and go into a desert place to pray.

44. A BRIEF PILGRIMAGE

At the foot of these hills stretches the Plain of Gennesaret,—the plain which Josephus describes, and which in his day must have been the very garden of the world. It is still cultivated,—but only in part and in small orchards,—and its melons and figs and grapes are famous throughout the Eastern country. It presents to the eye a waste appearance, uncared-for, as one passes its shores in the toiling boat.

Magdala comes into view, a tiny hamlet with scarce a dozen houses, just at the edge of this great plain. A little farther on, the fountain which Josephus speaks of is still seen,—“the round spring” where the extraordinary fish, which Josephus also mentions, is still found. This is the *coracinus* of Josephus (called the *barbur* by the Arabs), which emits a sound.

The water rushes to the lake, a clear stream from the broken aqueduct, which long ago was built to conduct it into the town. A little to the north of the spring is Khan Minyeh, just an accumulation of ruins, which by some travellers has been considered the site of Capernaum; and still going northward, crossing the western bay, one comes to the ruins of Tell Hum. The only habitable building in sight is the roof of the little house in which the Franciscan monk

lives, who has charge of the ruins. A large part of the ancient city is roughly enclosed in a wall built of fragments of its own grandeur. One climbs over blocks of stone, and in and out of curious little by-paths, and knocks at a closed gate. The sweet-faced friar, in his brown gown and rope-girdle, opens the door, and one stands in what must have been the heart of that ancient town.

Here is the synagogue of beautiful white limestone, broken and scattered, lying in ruined fragments on the ground! Corinthian capitals half-buried in the sand, and bits of exquisite Roman carving, are heaped in masses of confusion. One climbs over and around pieces of white marble, and finally comes to a paved marble space, the original floor of the synagogue, with the bases of pillars standing right and left. This was the centurion's synagogue,—this was the place of that wonderful discourse. Here Jesus boldly proclaimed, “I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.”¹

Here is the marble pavement on which those

¹ John, vi: 48-50.

blessed feet stood. The synagogue is not very large,—only seventy-five feet long and fifty-seven feet broad; a simple rectangular building,—but it was beautifully decorated within and without, and built of white limestone. At the entrance are four broad low steps leading down to the level of the street. This was the street of “His own city.” It was here that the people thronged Him on His way to the house of Jairus, whose little daughter lay sick of a fever; and here the woman came who “said within herself, If I may but touch his garment I shall be whole.”¹ In these streets the two blind men followed Him, crying, “Thou son of David, have mercy on us.”² It was here that the tribute money was demanded, and Jesus said to Peter, “Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money; that take, and give unto them for me and thee.”³ The house of Peter was near by, where his wife’s mother lay sick of a fever.

Here many mighty works were done, and here

¹ Matthew, ix : 21.

² Matthew, ix : 27.

³ Matthew, xvii : 27.

most precious words were said. The synagogue is in ruins; there is no roof, not even a broken arch. What bases of pillars remain are hardly more than three feet high. It is absolute destruction and desolation, and yet the blue sky arches it as no temple built with hands was ever arched.

We stayed long and reverently in those sacred precincts, and then wandered out to the green spring turf strewn with flowers, and sat in silence and contemplation.

The borders of the Sea of Galilee, Lamartine tells us, "seem to have borne cities instead of trees and forests." In the time of Christ these shores teemed with life. Villages of large population—some authorities say as many as ten thousand in each village—clothed the western hills. Capernaum was the garrison town, with its Roman soldiery quartered upon it,—the chief city of a district where there were many important places. It was on the high road from Damascus. Trains of laden camels from the East came to it; the active life of the world poured along these verdant hillsides. The critics tell us that Galilee was too busy a place for the blighting following of the law which the Pharisees insisted on, and that therefore the Messianic hope burned

brighter in this free mountain country than in other parts of Judea.

And to this populous land, full of life, of energy, He came, and lived by the seaside there, in "His own city." The contrast between that time and this is overwhelming. The prophecy is literally fulfilled: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which had been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."¹ The words of Isaiah come to mind also. It is "a possession for the bittern . . . and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts."² It knew not the day of its visitation, and lies a scattered waste of ruin beside the placid lake.

But amid all this destruction the figure of the centurion rises in dignity, and dominates his synagogue. "For he loveth our nation," his neighbors said of him. He understood the power of authority, when he besought Jesus to "speak the word only" that his servant might be healed; and of him the Master said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."³

¹ Matthew, xi : 23.

² Isaiah, xiv : 23.

³ Luke, vii : 9.

The row back to Tiberias was one of the unforgettable experiences of a lifetime. The sun was setting behind the western hills, and Mt. Hermon at the head of the lake changed its snow-white dome to one of rose and purple, and finally became a ghostly mountain in the dim evening light, faintly illuminated by a crescent moon. Time disappears ; there is no first nor last,—the daily miracle is the same as it was hundreds of years ago. Such a scene those blessed eyes must have looked upon; such beauty refreshed His spirit. In beholding it one comes near to the sources of life itself; one realizes as never before the everlastingness of the invisible, and learns anew that “the flesh profiteth nothing”; that the words of Jesus, “they are spirit, and they are life.” “If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.”

Let us pray :—

Our Heavenly Father, Grant unto us that we may know the day of our visitation ; that we may have the eyes to see, and the ears to hear, what Thou wouldest have us see and hear. Thou dost still speak words of wonder to us. Help us to see that the externals profit nothing; to get at the heart of the meaning Thou wouldest have us

50 A BRIEF PILGRIMAGE

understand. While we rejoice in all the beauty about us, may it carry to each one of us a deeper sense of the truth that is beauty, of the union with Thee that is Life. So may all loveliness truly minister to the unending life; so may all life take on a continuity, because it is rooted, grounded, built, in Thee.

Give us that bread which came down from heaven, we beseech Thee, for Jesus' sake. AMEN.



THE PLAIN OF SHARON



“IF GOD SO CLOTHE THE GRASS”

HE must have known this lily of the field
In all the glory of its crimson dress ;
This purple iris in its loveliness,
This cyclamen,—its leaves a silver shield,—
This mignonette, this orchid, all appealed
In beauty to Him, each was an express
Image of joy, which mutely did confess
His care, Who in the grass His love revealed.
And when upon the hills of Galilee
He spent the watches of the night in prayer,
When solemn stars in silence looked to see
The conflict of the wide world in one soul,
True man, true God, Who should redeem the whole,
With dawn adoring flowers were also there.

V

THE PLAIN OF SHARON

And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me. — ISAIAH, lxv : 10.

THE Plain of Sharon extends from Mt. Carmel on the north — the Carmel that juts out into the sea, with its long, low-lying headland — to Joppa on the south, and from the Mediterranean on the west to the foot-hills on the east. It is a lovely upland plain, never rising to any great height above the sea, but with undulating, parklike scenery. The historians tell us that at one time it must have borne a wonderful growth of oaks, — the oak that looks like the California live oak, with its evergreen leaves. A few scattered groups of trees remain, but the luxuriant forests which must at one time have covered the country are gone. There are softly swelling low hills, and three brooks, — rivers, as they were called in the Eastern phraseology, but to our Western eyes hardly more than good-sized rivulets.

In First Chronicles, where the various “heads

of departments” — one might almost call them — are mentioned, we are told who was over the vineyards, with a second overseer for the increase of the vineyards for the wine-cellars ; and over the olive trees there was a tree-warden, and over the oil which came from the olives was Joash; “And over the herds that fed in Sharon was Shitrai the Sharonite.”¹ The camels had their overseers and the flocks their special guardians. These all follow the other officers of David’s household, where the first mention is of the “sons of Asaph, and of Heman . . . who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals.”² Then follow the names of the choir, — those who were to prophesy with the harp and give thanks and praise to the Lord. The actual number of the choir is given : “So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the Lord, even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight.”³

The singers are mentioned in the very first place, and then follow all the officers of David’s household. These chapters in First Chronicles are interesting reading, setting forth as they do the life of the time. Among the officers of the

¹ 1 Chron. xxvii : 29.

² 1 Chron. xxv : 1.

³ 1 Chron. xxv : 7.

household come the husbandmen for the Plain of Sharon, which was the great pasture for the flocks and the herds. From here came the wool from which the cloth was spun for the clothing of the people.

We were to have two days upon the Plain of Sharon, and it was in the freshness of its spring-time beauty. The commentators have had a controversy on the "rose of Sharon." One of the great Germans (Delitzsch) holds that it was a papyrus which blooms in the autumn; but most of the commentators agree in thinking that it was the colchicum, or some kindred species of crocus, though the Jewish rabbis believe it to be the narcissus. It might easily be any one of the beautifully colored flowers which grow upon that plain. Three distinct varieties of anemones are there: the splendid great scarlet anemone, like that of the Italian hills; a smaller sister, with a red more like a poppy; and a third kind even smaller yet, but all of a glowing color which gleams in the sunlight and makes one smile with joy. Different varieties of narcissus bloom in the spring, and lovely brodias. The whole ground is a carpet of varied tapestry. The springtime green is always a wonder,—it seems impossible that any color can be so brilliant; and in Pales-

56 A BRIEF PILGRIMAGE

tine, with its beautiful sunshine on the rolling ground of the Plain of Sharon, the fields stretch out a garden of beauty. It looks now as if it had once been more fully cultivated, and indeed the whole of Palestine has a somewhat deserted look. But as we started out from Haifa for our two days' drive south, with the soft low sky,—which seemed to bring out the colors with greater beauty than ever,—to the right and left lay the new olive plantations which have been planted by the German colonists, and everywhere were signs of returning fertility, responding to the new cultivation.

Instead of keeping the road close to the shore, we turned inland a little, and went up through a charming rolling country, past villages and over the brooks which I have mentioned. Near the villages were the wells, to which the whole town came. Most curious wells they are, unlike any that I had ever seen before. There is no roof or covering of any kind,—just a wall of stone masonry, enclosing a space hardly ever more than eight feet square, and an entrance on one side. One goes down a narrow flight of stone steps of ladder-like steepness, and sometimes makes a turn before coming to the water, which lies quietly some twenty feet or more below the

surface. Here people come with their water-jars on their heads, and descend into the wells. One remembers how the daughters of the priest of Midian went out to water their flocks, and the strife which was at the well, when “the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.”¹ They probably descended just as these women did, and brought the water up and filled the troughs for the flocks to drink. Abraham’s servant met Rebecca at the well, and said, “Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.”² It all lives before one again; it might happen to-day, as one sees the women in their loosely flowing garments, with the heavy water-jars gracefully poised upon their heads.

All along the plain public work was going on in the way of mending the roads, and groups of children and girls were carrying stones,—each just one individual stone, six or eight inches in diameter perhaps; a roughly hewn block,—and carrying it upon their heads. Many of the little girls eight or ten years old had babies strapped

Exodus, ii : 17.

² Genesis, xxiv : 17, 18.

upon their backs, the small heads looking over their shoulders. If they were thus encumbered, they generally carried the stone in their arms ; but all day long the babies would be strapped to these children, while they went on with their work, bringing stones one by one to mend the road. They seemed to be a happy and cheerful lot of little people ; but one could not think that their task was a very suitable one, especially for the little older sisters who were doing duty as mothers. They laughed and chatted gayly and came running about us, and seemed to be quite delighted to have their photographs taken and to have a small handful of sweets distributed to them.

Toward the late afternoon we came into a country even more rolling and parklike ; the day began to lower, and the sweet spring rain came on,—not a heavy, drenching rain, but gentle showers,—and we were glad to reach our resting place in Zimmerim. This is one of the Jewish colonies, established by Baron Rothschild, under the auspices of the Society for the Recolonization of Palestine. It was just before the Passover time, and the whole town had given up its ordinary business and was preparing for the great feast. We went to the syna-



CHILDREN ON THE PLAIN OF SHARON

gogue,—a good modern building, put up by Baron Rothschild,—which seemed strangely out of place in the associations of the country which carry one so far back. Shewbread was being baked, and some was given us. The little inn was full of people coming and going, but our dragoman calmly seized upon the public parlor, and served us himself with our evening meal. Here we were in the very heart of the Plain of Sharon,—the emblem of all fertility, the name which typifies loveliness. The writer of the Song of Songs was certainly a great lover of nature; and though his work is too universal to be claimed by any one section of the country, yet it perhaps more nearly describes the Plain of Sharon in its physical features than any other part of Palestine.

The second day took us out of the hill country back toward the sea; and in mid-afternoon, with glorious sunshine bringing out the sapphire blue of the Mediterranean, we reached the ancient port of Joppa. But the two days' drive over the lovely country had brought home to us as nothing else could the extent of the land. Distances in the Bible are mentioned by a man's day's walk, and the forty-four miles which we had come would perhaps be divided into more

than two days. The country, as I have said before, is a small country,—a country the extent of which one can easily grasp,—and yet a country which combines within its borders almost every variety of physical feature and of climate. The Plain of Sharon has the advantage of the sea, and can never be as dry and desolate as the Jordan valley. Indeed, when the prophet wishes to speak of destruction he declares that “Sharon is like a wilderness.”¹

None of the most sacred associations cluster about it; we do not know that our Lord ever walked its length. His journeys that we know of are to Jerusalem, and were through the Jordan valley. But from the Hill of Nazareth He could have seen the sea as He looked toward the south. In the farther distance, the edge of this plain must have been visible, and the devout of all ages have taken that lovely verse from the Song of Songs and have applied it to Him: “I am the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley.”²

Jesus was a good husbandman. He knew the various kinds of soil: the stony places with no deepness of earth; the thorns which spring up and choke the seed; and the good soil,—all were

¹ Isaiah, xxxiii : 9. ² The Song of Solomon, ii : 1.

known to Him. Here on the plain is growing the mustard seed he spoke of,¹ and the grass is full of flowers. He was the first naturalist of the great teachers. The great men of Greece reasoned in abstract terms, were purely ethical. Jesus called our attention to the beauty of the world about us: “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”²

To cross this plain was a fit preparation for the more sacred scenes which followed. Jesus speaks of Himself constantly as the good shepherd, and uses pastoral similes of Himself. This was the great sheepfold; here the flocks were led by their shepherds. Our blessed Lord constantly spoke of sheep,—of the ninety and nine, and the one lost sheep. “Feed my sheep” was the charge to Peter. So to live upon these upland pastures for even a couple of days, sitting on the ground for our mid-day meal, gathering the flowers of David’s sheepcotes, gives a new meaning to the words of Christ: “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

¹ Matthew, xiv : 32.

² Matthew, vi : 28, 29.

Let us pray:—

O Thou Who dost watch over Israel, Who dost not slumber nor sleep, we give Thee thanks for the beauty of Thy visible world, for the springing of the flowers, for the softness of the grass. Thou dost prepare the meadows for the cattle, and herbs for the service of man. The whole earth is full of Thy goodness. May it be ours, O Lord, to look beyond the external, to rejoice in beauty because it is a part of Thine own ineffable perfection. As a well of water in a thirsty land, so may the thought of Thy love be to us, to refresh, to sustain, to make alive. Quicken our hearts and minds, we beseech Thee, by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may follow the Good Shepherd, and go in and out, and find pasture. AMEN.



JOPPA



JOPPA

THE ships of Hiram sailed these seas so blue,
And brought from Lebanon the goodly store
Of cedar for the Temple wall and floor.
And to these jagged rocks of blackest hue
Andromeda was chained ; here Perseus slew
The dragon. From this port with laboring oar
The ships of Tarshish fleeing Jonah bore ;
The waters teem with sacrifice and rue.
The prophet Moses from Mount Pisgah's height
Beheld this sea, e'er yet he fell on sleep ;
And David sang of all its tragic might,
Of that Leviathan with giant play
And stormy wind the Lord alone can stay,
And wild, tempestuous wonders of the deep.

VI

JOPPA

And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. — JONAH, i: 12.

JONAH was flying from a duty, — was in a state of open disobedience. But is there not something fine in his acknowledgment of responsibility, and taking the consequences of his revolt? It shows how such a man came to be chosen for a special message, and why he was preserved to carry it out.

The Biblical critics frankly admit that the book of Jonah is simply an edifying tale, — a tale which shows the futility of trying to escape from the voice of the Lord, and which sets forth the gentleness of God. “Doest thou well to be angry?” the Divine voice asks the prophet sitting beside his withered vine, and wishing he was dead, because the mercy of the Lord had spared Nineveh, “that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that can-

not discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle.”¹

The short story of the prophet contains a lovely song, or psalm, a sea song:—

“ For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas ;

And the floods compassed me about :

All thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

The waters compassed me about, even to the soul :

The depths closed me round about,

The weeds were wrapped about my head.

I went down to the bottoms of the mountains ;

The earth with her bars was about me forever :

Yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.”²

It is strange to find in the Biblical writings so few references to the sea. The 104th Psalm, of “this great and wide sea,” and the description of a storm in the 107th are the most famous passages. David was a hill man; his own country was of an inland character. The people of Israel had few if any vessels. It was Hiram, King of Tyre, who sent timber for the temple. “I will do all thy desire,” King Hiram said to Solomon, “concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir. My ser-

¹ Jonah, iv : 11.

² Jonah, ii : 3-7.

vants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea; and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place thou shalt appoint me."¹ This was on the Mediterranean, of course, and in all probability it was to Joppa that the timber came, for Joppa is the nearest port to Jerusalem, only some forty miles away. The name of the city is derived from Japheh, meaning beautiful, and it is mentioned as a Canaanite port on tablets which still exist and date from the fifteenth century B.C. The harbor is only a semblance of a harbor; great reefs guard its entrance, and the sea dashes over them with fury, making an entry often impossible.

Beside these Biblical associations of an early day, Joppa was localized as the scene of one of the most beautiful of the Greek myths. It was to these rocks that Andromeda was chained, and here Perseus came and killed the dragon. In the time of Pliny the chains were still shown! All the charming old tales are being explained by modern scholarship, and we are told that the story of Perseus and Andromeda had its base in a lunar eclipse, the dragon being the Earth-shadow. But it is interesting to note that both in the Biblical story, and in the classical one,

¹ 1 Kings, v : 8, 9.

there is a monster. Is it not more freely interpreted by saying that there has always been the conflict between good and evil,—between the raging of the sea and the safety of land? Isaiah speaks of it: “In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan . . . that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.”¹ This is supposed to have been written seven hundred years before Christ. Had Isaiah heard of Perseus’ monster,—a devouring evil creature, to whom the best and fairest had to be sacrificed?

These ancient associations cluster round that seaside city, and we found ourselves one fair spring morning in a very garden of the Lord. Oranges hung thick amid their shining darksome leaves, the golden apples of the Hesperides; oleander trees stood about, vineyards stretched toward the hills. The blue sea lapped its pebbly beach, as if no breath of storm could ever disturb it. The streets are narrow and most picturesque, with people from every nation under heaven thronging them. In true Oriental fashion, cooking and various household economies were going on in broad daylight in the open, and we threaded our way through many distracting interests: past

¹ Isaiah, xxvii : 1.



HOUSE OF SIMON THE TANNER

supercilious camels and ambling donkeys and persuasive sweetmeat-sellers, to a little square house overlooking the harbor, halfway up the hillside upon which the city is built. Tradition calls this the house of Simon the tanner. Here it was that Peter was lodging, when Cornelius the centurion had the word: "And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter." Here it was that the vision came to Peter, and that he was shaken from his stronghold of Judaism.—"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."¹

Whether we believe that this was the very house or not, the place was near here, and there could hardly be a more impressive one to bring home the lesson of the universality of the Fatherhood of God. It is a place steeped in ancient tradition,—tradition which we have been taught to call heathen, but which denoted a firm belief in the triumph of good over evil; a port of entry, almost the only one in Palestine, where men of all nations congregated even more than at this day. It was the very place to enforce such a lesson. "God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean," the Apostle humbly declares.²

¹ Acts, x : 5,15.

² Acts, x : 28.

Dragons seem to have belonged in that particular part of the country, for Lydda is only a few miles away, and it was in Lydda that St. George slew the dragon, and became the patron saint of England. In Lydda St. Peter was staying when that holy woman who was full of good works died in Joppa. "And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa and the disciples heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men desiring that he would not delay to come to them."¹

How graphic the scene is,—the widows who stood about weeping, and showing the coats and garments Dorcas had made for them, and their joy when she was "presented unto them alive"! It was in Joppa that St. Peter tarried many days,—days of preparation for his after ministry. It is a place of old and new. Jonah—Andromeda—St. Peter—Dorcas! Two prophets: one of the old dispensation, announcing wrath and judgment to come; one of the new, declaring, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."² Two women: one, the type of maiden purity delivered to the powers of evil as a sacrifice; the other, the woman who was

¹ Acts, ix : 38.

² Acts, x : 34, 35.

"full of good works and alms deeds which she did."

And there the city stands around which these lovely stories cluster. The sea then "wrought and was tempestuous," as it does to this day. The eye of imagination may still see leviathan playing in the waters, and King Hiram's transports threading their way into the rock-bound harbor. We still have our dragons,—Perseus and St. George have not exterminated them all. The world is waiting for Andromeda, and still more for the active Dorcas. Under Syrian skies, or in a western world, the call is the same,—a call to service, to high living, to wage war on the powers of evil. "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet."

Let us pray:—

Thou knowest, O Lord, the dragons we each one have to fight,—of self-indulgence, of evasion, of fear. Thou who alone canst give courage, come to each of us, we pray Thee, to arm us with Thine own invisible might. Make us strong to overcome, and send us forth prepared for Thy service in whatever way Thou shalt require: in ways of sacrifice, or ways of construc-

tive work, ready to do, or to bear, as Thou shalt appoint. All the doing, all the bearing is for Thee, dear Lord. Fit us then for Thy work, we beseech Thee. We ask it for Christ's sake.
AMEN.



BETHLEHEM



BETHLEHEM

A MOUNTAIN town, with dark red soil of clay;
Far in the East uprises Pisgah's height
From which the dying Moses had a sight
Of all the promised land. The ancient way
Winds up the stony hillside; children play
Beneath old olives, ruddy children, bright
With sparkling eyes; and camels in their might
Stalk proudly, bearing loads with trappings gay.
A land of pasture; here the Shepherd's Psalm
Takes on new meaning; here is David's well,
With flocks of sheep and goats, and rural calm.
And in this cave, which sheltered once King Saul,
This hidden place, was born the Lord of all,
Incarnate, God with us, Emmanuel.

VII

BETHLEHEM

And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes¹ of Juda : for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel. — MATTHEW, ii : 6.

AT this season of the year the thoughts of the whole Christian world turn to the little town of Bethlehem, in that far-off Syrian land from which the light shone “which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”¹ There had been lights; there had been portents; but all the lights and all the portents lead up to and culminate in this one true light in Whom was life, “and the life was the light of men.”²

It is only a few months ago since we approached it with reverent feet,— a little town, set on its olive-crowned hill, the great olive trees growing in ordered ranks, rising one above another up the terraced hillside. The earth is red, with streaks of crimson, and the soft gray-green of the ancient olives throws purple shadows upon

¹ John, i : 9.

² John, i : 4.

it in the brilliancy of the Syrian sun. From far down the plain one can see it. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills," King David wrote, "from whence cometh my help."¹ One rides out of Jerusalem toward the south, through the Valley of Hinnom, and then the road begins to ascend by a long, gentle slope.

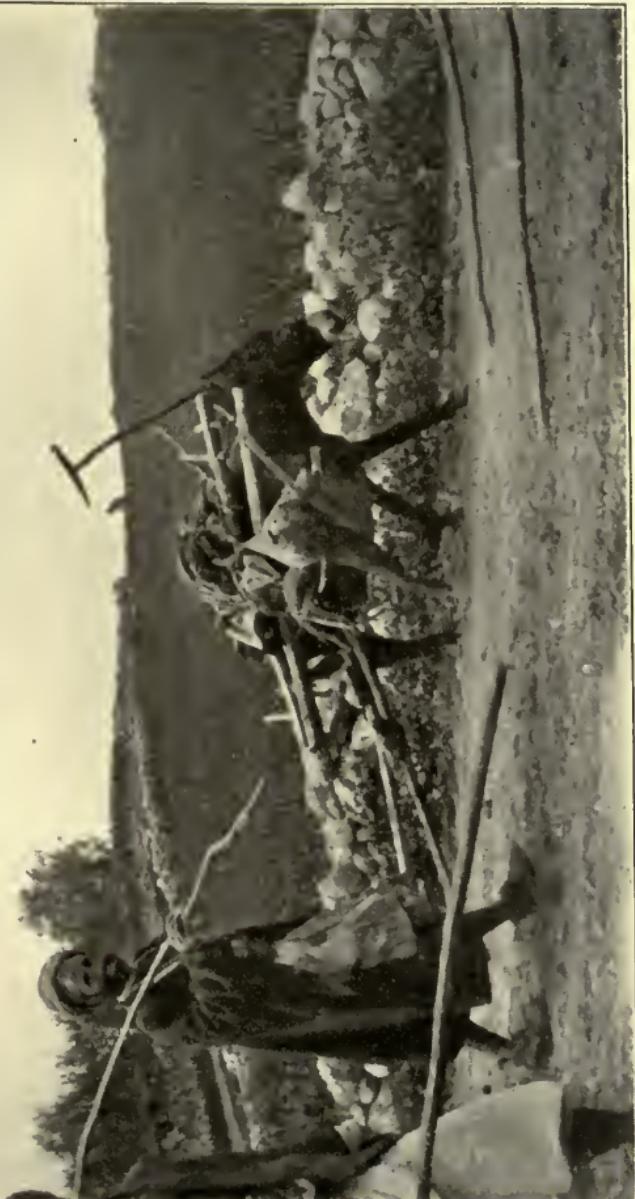
One of the earliest mentions of Bethlehem is of Jacob's journey to it, with Rachel, from Bethel, when Benjamin was born. "And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Beth-lehem."² Her tomb is passed close to the modern road, which winds up and up, always ascending. It was early springtime, and the husbandmen had been trimming the olive trees. Camels laden with enormous loads of the soft gray twigs, looking like moving haystacks, with a head and four spindling legs, moved slowly up the incline. The vine was putting forth her leaf, and the bare branches of the twisted fig trees were budding. Higher and higher we rose, always approaching the town perched upon its hill-top like a mediæval fortress. What associations it awoke!

The inhabitants of Bethlehem, we are told, have always been people of beauty. David was

¹ Psalm cxxi : 1.

² Genesis, xxxv : 16-20.

THE HUSBANDMAN AND HIS TOOLS



the type of them all,—“ ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to.”¹ The country round about is fruitful. Bethlehem-Ephratah is the Hebrew term expressive of the fertility of the region. One must remember the wildness of the Jordan valley and the great deserted plain of the Dead Sea, to appreciate fully the beauty and fertility of such a hill as the Hill of Bethlehem. Mt. Pisgah from beyond Jordan commands it; Moses could have looked from that height to this hill. Here Benjamin was born ; and this is the city of Naomi, to which she returned when Ruth followed her mother-in-law, saying, “ Whither thou goest I will go.”² It was in this gate that, in fulfilment of the Mosaic law, Boaz, her kinsman, offered her to a still nearer kinsman, and upon his refusal took her himself to wife. It was thus that she became the great-grandmother of David, and the ancestress of our Blessed Lord Himself.³ In this town was the sepulchre of David ; here he and many of his descendants found their last resting-place. It well may be called the City of David.

Bethlehem has always been looked to with veneration as the dwelling-place of kings. Micah

¹ 1 Samuel, xvi : 12.

² Ruth, i : 16.

³ Ruth, iv : 13-17.

the Prophet, seven hundred years before Christ, wrote the passage St. Matthew quotes: "But thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. . . . And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth."¹

We climbed slowly up the winding road and entered the little walled city, looking like a mediæval Italian town. About eight thousand people live in it, in square solid houses, built on terraces, with narrow slippery streets running steeply up the hillside. At the eastern end of the town, close to the entrance, is the Church of the Nativity. It was built by the Crusaders in the style of their own home churches, with long, low walls. With the three convents which adjoin it, it makes a huge pile of buildings, like a fortress, forming a hollow square, the grim outer walls facing all corners. The nave of this great church, now bare and desolate, is the basilica built by Constantine in 330. Baldwin I was crowned

¹ Micah, v : 2-4.

here, and Edward IV brought English oak to renew the roof. The church has four rows of marble columns, each a single stone with a Corinthian capital. On some of the shafts are cut the shields of crusaders; and the mosaics on the walls were executed in the twelfth century. The nave of the old basilica belongs to all Christians; and the three adjacent convents are those of the Latin, Greek, and Armenian churches. But this great building serves only for a portal to the holy of holies,—as the entrance to the shrine to which all worshipers come. One treads with reverence its ancient pavement, back of the choir, and then descends a long, narrow flight of steps cut in the rock. The church has been dark compared to the outer sunshine; but here real darkness reigns, lit by twinkling lamps. The way leads down some twenty feet below the choir to one of the subterranean caverns common in the country. The walls have been mostly covered with frescoes and decorations, and the place is lighted with perpetual burning lamps; but the roof retains its natural appearance, and the cleavage of the rock is seen. It is a spacious rock-chamber, some thirty-three feet long, and eleven feet wide, and at its very end there is a tiny recess opening out of it,—a little side alcove, where

one could secure absolute privacy. Here the silver star is let into the floor. This all tradition points to as the place over which the heavenly star rested when the Star of our Life had his birth.

It is very quiet and serene in that underground chamber; the few visitors who come, stand or kneel in silent adoration; there is no sound of worship, no hymn of praise; each soul in its own solitary fashion makes its own obeisance. And one sees how natural it all was. The story says, "Because there was no room for them in the inn." These subterranean caverns are common all through the country. You will remember how David was in hiding in one of them. Would it not be beautiful to think that it might be this very one into which Saul went, "when he came to the sheeptotes by the way where was a cave,"¹ and David cut off the skirt of his garment and showed it to him afterward, in token that he had had his life in his hands? These were places which would very easily be used for the shelter of cattle; this one probably had its natural entrance, before the church was built over it, and in the primitive days the ox and the ass were a part of a man's household. You will remember how

¹ 1 Samuel, xxiv : 3.

"HE GOETH BEFORE THEM, AND THE SHEEP FOLLOW HIM"



the Prophet Nathan speaks of the lamb which lay in the poor man's bosom "and was unto him as a daughter."¹ Without the helpful labor of the household beasts the stony soil would not yield its increase, and the habitation of the cattle was of concern to their owners. In the country, people still live in tents close to their animals, and in the towns and villages, the houses were not of any great dimensions in those ancient days, or, in Syria, of great elegance.

One thinks of a stable in our more civilized land as a place of the outcast; but this wonderful natural cavern was warm and sheltered and furnished every requirement for a secluded and restful place. Every Christmas season the thoughts of all Christian people turn toward this new beginning in this dim and unknown spot,—unknown then,—perhaps best known of any place in all the Christian world, if not in its actual physical features, yet as the manger in which that blessed infant was laid so many hundreds of years ago.

A little distance to the south of the Church of the Nativity, not more than fifteen minutes' walk, is the shepherds' field,—a field now enclosed with high walls. A grotto is also there, where the

¹ 2 Samuel, xii : 3.

shepherds were supposed to have been resting that wonderful night when the angel appeared with "good tidings of great joy." And one looks from its mouth toward the East, from out of which the star came. That also is a holy grotto, but our thoughts go back to the grotto at Bethlehem, where there are still more traditions which should be dear to the Christian heart. Here St. Jerome lived and worked; here he made the famous translation of the Scriptures into Latin,—the Vulgate, as it is called. Here he gathered his disciples about him and lived his life in the very place where that blessed Life began on earth.

The ancient Egyptians had a beautiful myth about the sun. In the morning he is called Har-machis; at mid-day, in his strength, he is Ra; at evening he is Tum, who is slain by darkness. But the victory of Darkness over Light is short-lived: at dawn the god of day is recreated and shines again in his glory. The world has always longed for light; "more light" was not only Goethe's dying cry, but has been the cry of every earnest soul. The primal Light, the uncreated Splendor, has lured men to a life-long search. The prophecy of the fulfilment of that hope runs through all the ancient writings of the world. "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun

of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” “O that salvation were come out of Zion,” sings the Psalmist. “O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!”¹ was the cry of the writer of that wonderful poem we call the book of Job, thirty-five hundred years ago. It is the eternal cry of the soul, and here in this tiny cavern, in the warm darkness of the shrouded day, “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”² The Divine in the Human, the Human in the Divine! The power of love revealed as never before, “for unto us is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

Let us pray: —

O Thou who art Light, and the Author of Light, eternal, uncreated, we Thy children come to Thee to rejoice and give thanks that Thou hast manifested Thyself, that Thou didst send Thy son as a little child. We open our hearts to receive Him; may He be born in us, we pray Thee, —not in a far country,—not in ancient time,—but here and now incarnate Thy Love in each

¹ Job, xxvii : 3.

² John, i : 14.

one of us. May we be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is: and as we come with kings and shepherds, with pilgrims and children to sing Thy praise, may it mean life to us,—fullness of life that comes from Thee,—fullness of love in pouring out our hearts before Thee. Accept our offering of praise, we beseech Thee, for Christ's sake. AMEN.



JERICHO



JERICHO

THIS plain made bright with streaks of crimson clay
And sprinkled o'er with grains of golden sand —
The vestige of a long forgotten strand —
Once saw the host of Israel as it lay
With pikes and trumpets in war's fierce array.
Now in the grass the solemn wild storks stand ;
A pensive silence broods upon the land
Unbroken by the shout which won that day.
Zacchæus lived here, who desired to see
When Christ came down the Jordan wilderness,
And one born blind cried out exceedingly.
I too am blind, my Lord ; O give me sight, —
I lumine my mind, Thou very Light of Light ;
I cannot let Thee go, until Thou bless.

VIII

JERICHO

So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. So that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. — JOSHUA, vi : 20.

JERICHO, the city of the plain,—Jericho, the fragrant,—Jericho, the city of palm trees,—these all are names which her lovers delighted to give her. It lies at the entrance of that great ravine, a sharp cañon cut in the mountains by some vast convulsion, leading from the plain of Jordan up into that wilderness in which our blessed Lord sought solitude, which has its summit in the mountains about Jerusalem. This is the Valley of Achor, the vale of trouble. The most famous of the traditions of Jericho is the falling of the walls when the host of Israel went in to possess the land. To this city the spies came, and were let down in a basket outside the walls by Rahab. And Joshua burnt it “with fire and all that was therein,” and saved

only Rahab and all her father's house, "because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho." "Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it."¹ But in spite of this doom, five hundred years later, in the days of Ahab, "did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho," and incur the penalty.²

It was to the new Jericho, not yet a hundred years old, that Elijah and his servant Elisha came together.

"And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head this day? And he answered, Yes, I know it; hold ye your peace."³ It was to Jericho that the prophet returned after Elijah had been taken from him, and here he pretended to let himself be comforted by the eager search of the fifty strong men, sons of the prophets, who went over Jordan to search for his Master. But it must have been a real comfort to him to heal the waters of the city. Ac-

¹ Joshua, vi : 25, 26.

² 1 Kings, xvi : 34.

³ 2 Kings, ii : 5.

cording to the ancient story the men came to him, saying, "The situation of this city is pleasant as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren." Then Elisha had a new cruse brought to him, and put salt in it, and cast it into the spring.—"Thus saith the Lord," he cried, "I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land."¹ And there the great fountain is to this day, a basin catching a plenteous stream of pure limpid water, which gushes from the ground. In the old days sugar-cane grew here, and palm trees were planted. "I was exalted as a rose plant in Jericho," the prophet sings.—A land of fruitfulness and plenty it must have been.

But we have tenderer association with the city. "And they came to Jericho," we are told of that last journey to celebrate the passover in Jerusalem. From his own city of Capernaum on the Lake of Galilee, Jesus and his disciples would very probably have started in the boat of Zebedee, or one of their fisher friends, and landed at the southern end of the lake. Then would come the wild torrent of the Jordan, a mountain stream rushing down through its own gorge to the salt

¹ 2 Kings, ii : 19-22.

sea of the plain, a distance of sixty miles, during which it falls six hundred feet. Along the western bank of this stream the company of disciples would journey, walking by day, and resting under the stars by night,—for we must remember it was literally true that he “had not where to lay his head.” It would grow warmer as they proceeded,—an almost semi-tropical vegetation, with fig trees, and olives, clothing the spurs of the hills. “And they came to Jericho.” It was here that blind Bartimæus cried so much the more, when they told him to hold his peace, “Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!”¹ Then came one of the contrasts with which the life of Jesus abounded. He saw Zacchæus in his sycamore tree, waiting for a glimpse of him, and called to him to come down, “for to-day I must abide at thy house.”²

In the time of the Roman Empire Jericho was a famous city. Herod built a splendid palace there overlooking the Dead Sea, with a lovely view of Mt. Pisgah. It was a city of such importance that Antony gave it to Cleopatra,—a worthy present for a queen.

Full of such remembrances, with our Bibles for guide-books, one lovely spring day we came

¹ Mark, x : 48.

² Luke, xix : 5.

to the ancient town. Mt. Pisgah shone serene upon us, all the long descent from Jerusalem. The yellow sands of the great plain in which the sapphire of the Dead Sea is the mystic jewel stretched about us. Tall grasses stood, dry and sere, and moved gently in the soft air. Close by, a great white stork took his ease, one leg curled up under his wing, as with an indolent gaze he watched our approach. He hardly raised himself above the golden rushes, as he slowly flapped his great wings and flew to a little distance. Bands of pilgrims were returning from the Jordan, carrying their shoes in their hands; for is not this sacred ground? It was on this very plain that the Angel, the captain of the Lord's host, said to Joshua, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy."¹ Many of the pilgrims had great flowing white garments stretched over their shoulders, drying in the sun. These were the baptismal robes in which they had been immersed in the waters of Jordan, which would become their shrouds. The sun was sinking low in the western sky. Lovely purple clouds were gathering upon the Mountains of Moab, when at last we turned to the little town, with its low square houses, a tiny

¹ Joshua, v : 15.

narrow street on which they are built, with one or two cross streets, comprising the whole city. Herod's castle from its hill in the distance dominated it, now a heap of scattered stones. The fountain keeps its everlasting freshness, and gushes forth as it has done for hundreds of years. It is a little way from the modern town,—the ancient Jericho must have been far larger. Here the women come with their water-jars,—the firkins of the New Testament,—the same sort of jars as were used at the marriage at Cana.

The day we were there, and the night, was one full of beauty. Pomegranates and oleanders were beginning to bloom. Our rooms at the comfortable little inn faced the rising sun. Just opposite us, the host of Israel had crossed the Jordan coming from the east, and Elijah crossed it from the west. John the Baptist preached the Kingdom of God close by. Here our Saviour Himself came. It is not one of the most sacred places, but a place full of association, full of reposeful beauty, full of charm. And the two incidents which are recorded as taking place here embody the whole of the teaching of our Lord. It was in the house of Zacchæus, according to St. Luke, that Jesus added the parable of the talents. And it was here that He declared plainly that He



THE DEAD SEA, AND RUINS OF HEROD'S CASTLE

square streets on which they are built, with not even cross streets, comprising the whole city. Herod's castle from his hill in one distance dominated it, now a heap of scattered stones. The fountain keeps its everlasting bubbling, and gushes forth as it has done for hundreds of years. It is a little way from the modern town, — the ancient Jericho must have been far larger. Here the women come with their water-jars, — the similes of the New Testament, — the same were of jugs as were used at the marriage at Cana.

The day we were there, and the night, was one full of beauty. Pomegranates and olives were beginning to bloom. Our rooms at the comfortable little inn faced the rising sun. Just opposite us, the host of Israel had crossed the Jordan coming from the east, and Elijah crossed it from the west. John the Baptist preached the Kingdom of God close by. Here our Saviour Himself came. It is not one of the most grand places, but a place full of association, full of especial beauty, full of charm. And the two incidents which are recorded as taking place here embody the whole of the teaching of our Lord. First in the house of Zacchaeus, according to St. Luke, did Jesus ^{say} ON THE JOURNEY OF HIS GREAT MINI

to say here that He declared plainly that the



was "come to seek and to save that which was lost."¹

And may we not take comfort in the persistence of blind Bartimæus? His neighbors told him to hold his peace; they rebuked him openly, and he cried so much the more. "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" Jesus asked, when He had stopped the whole onward pressing crowd which opened up to have the blind man brought to Him. And the man had his answer ready,—no vague, general blessing, but one specific definite thing: "Lord, that I may receive my sight,"² he said. Is not that the cry of every earnest soul?

Moses from Mt. Pisgah close by Jericho had his vision of the promised land. The blind man had the answer to his prayer: "Thy faith hath saved thee," the blessed voice replied.

Oh, in an age of doubt and question,—an age when the workings of God are seen to be in orderly sequences, till sometimes natural law is put in the very place of God Himself,—let us pray for that faith which goes behind order, behind method, to the very heart of divinity! "To him that hath shall be given," Jesus said in this very city. If we are children of God, surely

¹ Luke, xix : 10.

² Luke, xviii : 41.

He Himself must long to fulfil our aspirations which are emanations of Himself!

Let us pray:—

Lord give us our sight, we beseech Thee. Thou hast placed us in a world of beauty and of wonder, Thou hast given us all things richly to enjoy. But beyond all the externals, O Lord, beyond the joy of the senses, give us some blessed vision of Thyself. Come to each of us to-day, at this very hour, and abide with us, as did Thy Son in that ancient city. May we welcome Thee gladly, opening our very hearts to receive Thee. AMEN.



THE JORDAN AND THE DEAD SEA



THE JORDAN

THIS is the mystic place, this turbid stream
Swift flowing toward the Salt Sea of the Plain
Between its banks of rushes and of cane;
This is the river of the Prophet's dream.—
From Pisgah's lofty heights he saw its gleam,
When with his eager dying eyes astrain
He looked upon the Promised Land in vain,
And this flood marked its eastern verge extreme.
And more, for here was the Forerunner sent,—
The voice from out the wilderness : “ Prepare,
Make straight a highway for our God, repent ! ”
And here He came ; and baptism being ended
The heavens opened, and the Dove descended,
O humble stream, canst thou such glory bear ?

IX

THE JORDAN AND THE DEAD SEA

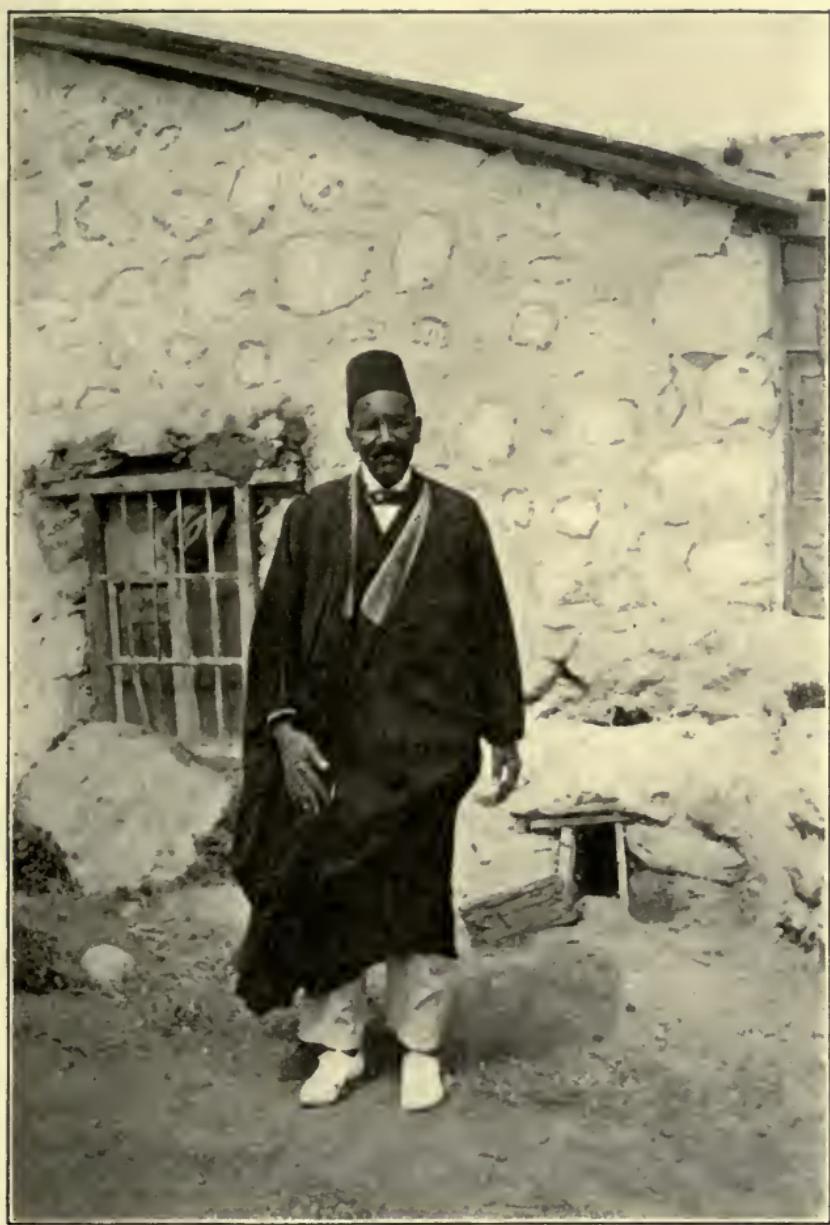
These waters shall come thither : for they shall be healed ;
and everything shall live whither the river cometh.— EZEKIEL,
xlvii : 9.

EZEKIEL was *the strong* as his name signifies. He was of a priestly family, and with many others was taken to Babylon in the captivity of Israel. There he lived, about six hundred years before Christ, and there he warned, and denounced, and scourged the people with his terrible words ; and then came the actual destruction of Jerusalem,— and he was dumb. He might well have said, “ By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea we wept, when we remembered Zion,” though that hymn is supposed to have been written toward the end of the captivity. “ Son of man,” he delighted to call himself, and from his grief he rose to consolation. A new country he saw in his mind,— a new temple from which the worship of Jehovah should be preached,— a sanctuary which should extend its blessings, not only to the Jews, but to aliens

who should be born in the country, and become worshipers of the God of Israel. He planned a state in which religion was to be honored; he set bounds to the lands of the temple; the whole ritual of service he delighted to elaborate. So it would be when the captivity was ended, he fondly pictured. And from the sanctuary he saw a great river flowing, ankle-deep, and knee-deep, and to the loins, and then a mighty river which could not be passed over, rushing toward that salt sea of the plain, that desert place in the fertile land,—so bare, so arid, that no living plant could grow there, and no fish live in its waters. “And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed.”¹

It is as if the prophet is describing a new Jordan,—not a Jordan lost in the desert, but one which shall bring healing to the bitter waters. The river itself, aside from its sacred associations, is one of the most remarkable in the world. It begins as a mountain stream, fed from the snows of Hermon, and, descending to a swampy plain between the Jordan Hills and the Mountains of Galilee, forms the Waters of Merom. From this

¹ Ezekiel, xlviij : 12.



THE DRAGOMAN

lake about ten miles north of the Sea of Galilee, it emerges to lose itself, a muddy stream, in those crystal depths. It is only sixty miles in the straight line it has to run from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, where it is lost forever; but in those sixty miles it falls six hundred feet, and twists and turns, till Lieutenant Lynch, in following its windings, sailed two hundred miles. The Sacramento in California — that enormous stream — is the only other river which makes so great a descent in so short a distance.

The road winds on over the scarlet sands, — the most brilliant sands, perhaps, in the whole world, streaked with crimson and gold, reflecting the sun in a dazzling way, painful to the eyes. At the edge of the plain are the low bushes and trees which mark a streak of greenness where the Jordan enters the Salt Sea. All is silent and desolate. Rushes grow upon the plain, and low bushes around which swarms of tiny insects move in clouds. A great stork stands motionless upon the crimson clay ; a silence that can be felt broods over the deserted plain ; and the sun pours down his fervent rays. The heat is overpowering. Bare, arid, pitiless, the sands stretch to the borders of the turquoise water. I dipped my hand into it, and tasted the drops. It is indescribably bitter ;

an immense amount of solid matter is held in solution, we are told. The very wavelets upon the surface seem to move sluggishly, as if from the heaviness of the water. It is all weird, and unnatural; a sea of death and not of life.

It was this sea which the prophet saw changed by the river flowing from the sanctuary. Its waters were healed; fish abounded, and trees with fruit were to grow beside it. The valley of desolation was to become habitable ground.

In reading this ancient vision, one cannot but be struck with the likeness it bears to St. John's spiritual city. The holy stream is there, the river of the water of life. How precious water is in those Eastern countries, we can hardly realize. Nazareth has a single fountain for the whole city; the wells were often the scenes of fierce conflicts, as men fought for possession of them. And water is the literal life-giver, the nourisher of all vegetation, the necessity of all living creatures. St. John has trees bearing all manner of fruits, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Ezekiel says quite literally, "whose leaves are for medicine," for the tinctures, and elixirs, and simple herb teas with which primitive medicine abounds.

Both the older and the later seer, in language

of great beauty, look *forward*,—forward to a new and better time. Ezekiel speaks of actual facts. There is the desert ; there is the Dead Sea ; and his only possible remedy for this blot upon his beloved country, he conceived to be in a stream issuing from the Temple of God Himself, from the very sanctuary of Jehovah. The physical fulfilment of his vision has not come, but may we not get a hint from the beauty of that dream as to a spiritual reality ? Society has its Dead Seas,—the world is full of barren and waste places. Where there should be abundance and production, too often is only stagnation.

We see it in our own country. Too often public opinion is indifferent as to great evils, too often men are treated with contempt and neglect. Whole classes of people — and shame to us that there should be classes — are oppressed. Life becomes sordid, crushing poverty blights, and men live in desert places of soul and body.

How is a change to come ? How is a truer life to be begun ? Is it not by new life coming to these desert places ? Is it not by the refreshing river, which comes from the very sanctuary of God ? And what is this river but the life of our youth,— of our young men and maidens, who

go out from the places of learning, where they have been nourished not on the dry bones of knowledge, but on the very bread of life, that they too may spread life, that they too may bring refreshing? You are a part of this life-giving stream. You are to bring healing to the bitter waters of strife. You are to make the desert blossom as the rose, because on your heads are the blessings of unnumbered years, because you issue forth intent on newness of Life, because you come from the very sanctuary of God.

All far-seeing spirits, all men who have moved the world, have been consoled with deep and holy visions of things to come. There is a noble dissatisfaction, an undying quest of the soul. What a moment that was when Isaiah in rapt ecstasy saw the seraphims, with wings covering their faces, and crying :—

“ Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts :
The whole earth is full of his glory.”

It is the pure in heart who shall see God. Until some intimation of the blessedness of that sight is granted us we do not know what life may be. And every soul before me must have had some such intimation,—dimly apprehended it may be, or for a momentary glimpse,—but some

knowledge of Divine life beyond and above, and yet including us, we may all have. On the wings of music it comes to us, that art which angels use, in which worship finds its highest expression :—

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts :
Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory.”

It is the New Jerusalem we seek,— the new heaven and the new earth ; and heaven here and now on earth is our special business. If we can be a part of that blessed river flowing from the sanctuary of God, if we can be included in that life-giving stream, and do its renewing work in a waiting world, then indeed shall we be blessed, and our lives be a “pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.”

Let us pray :—

Our Heavenly Father, send Thy life-giving flood to course through and through our hearts, we beseech Thee. Thou who dost turn the dry places into a standing water, send Thy river of refreshing to every barren soul, to quicken and revive that it may bear fruit abundantly. Thou alone dost know the arid places of our hearts;

Thou alone canst penetrate the wilderness of conflicting desires and clamoring thoughts. Come with Thy healing streams, dear Lord, to cleanse and to purify. Establish our souls, we pray Thee, that we may be wells of water springing up into everlasting life. AMEN.



THE WILDERNESS



THE WILDERNESS

UP from the Jordan straight His way He took
To that lone wilderness, where rocks are hurled,
And strewn, and piled, — as if the ancient world
In strong convulsion seethed and writhed and shook,
Which heaved the valleys up, and sunk each brook,
And flung the molten rock like ribbons curled
In twists of gray around the mountains whirled : —
A grim land, of a fierce, forbidding look.
The wild beasts haunt its barren stony heights,
And wilder visions came to tempt Him there ;
For forty days and forty weary nights,
Alone He faced His mortal self and sin,
Chaos without, and chaos reigned within,
Subdued and conquered by the might of prayer.

X

THE WILDERNESS

And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.—LUKE, iv : 1.

WE are just entering upon one of the most holy seasons of the year, a season which by consent of many Christian centuries has been set apart as a time of devout contemplation, of penitence, of prayer. It is a time of preparation, a time which has its logical fulfilment in Easter joy, though in reality the forty days in the wilderness and the day of Resurrection were separated by three years of full and crowded life.

Let me try to take you to the actual scene of the fasting, as it appears in its physical aspects at the present time.

The Jordan, as you know, is a little river, not so wide or so fine a stream as the Charles, hardly larger than our brook as it issues from the lake. The country is all small. The journeys of our Lord were measured by days' walks, and those

blessed feet trod the whole length of the land, following the Jordan from its birth on the slopes of Mt. Hermon to its end in the Dead Sea.

Just opposite Jericho, a few miles from the Salt Sea of the Plain, is the traditional place of baptism. The river bends, making a broad sweep between its reedy banks, with the low shrubs and bushes overhanging its muddy waters. The western shore is trodden into holes and hollows by pilgrim feet, as they rush to the sacred stream. Here it was that Elijah wrapped his mantle about his staff and smote the waters, as he passed over on that last journey.¹ Here it was that the ark of the Lord was carried over when the Israelites went in to possess the land; "in the east border of Jericho."² And here it was that John the Baptist came preaching to all the world, "Repent, Repent!" "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" he exclaimed when Jesus came to him. "Suffer it to be so now," He replied; and as He came up out of the water the heavens opened, and the Dove descended.³ Did that outward act of devotion crystallize the sense of His mission which had

¹ 2 Kings, ii:8.

² Joshua, iv: 19.

³ Matthew, iii: 15, 16.

been growing upon Jesus in the quiet years in Galilee? It was after the Voice had spoken, after the Dove had descended, that we are told,—“immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness.”¹ And what a wilderness that is! The whole of the depressed country of Syria, that part lying below the sea-level, has something weird and uncanny about it. There has so evidently been a great convulsion of nature. The mountains, seamed with twisted masses of ashen-hued rock, are grim and fantastic in form. Red clay lies in streaks close beside the cold gray stone; short, stubbly grass, dry and hard, grows scantily upon the barren soil. The brook Cherith cuts its way through a mighty gorge, winding over and creeping around masses of stone and huge boulders. Caves abound,—black sinister holes leading into the mountain, the abode of wild beasts, or still wilder men. This is that valley of Achor,—that is, the valley of trouble,—into which Joshua took the man who had “wrought folly in Israel” by retaining some of the spoils of the fallen city of Jericho, and stoned him and all his household. It is so terrible a place that when the prophet Hosea wants to give the strongest image of blessing, he declares the

¹ Mark, i : 12.

Lord will give Israel "the Valley of Achor for a door of hope."

Even after the winter rains there is little water in the brook, and the vegetation is stunted and starved. While the plain is gay with flowers, only the thorn and the prickly cactus grow in this arid soil. The sun beats into this crevice in the crust of the earth with tropical vehemence; the whole gorge has a sinister and terrible aspect.

It was into this desolate waste that our Saviour retreated, and for forty days and nights was away from human companionship. The Evangelists summarize the temptations which assailed Him there,—the threefold temptation to test His whole being, body, mind, and spirit. He hungered, we read. There was the cry of the physical,—the need of the body; to which He replied, "Man shall not live by bread alone." Then came the temptation of ambition,—the keen strong mind, which could "see the kingdoms of the world at a glance," must have rejoiced in the possibility of ruling them, but did not waver for an instant.—"Get thee behind me, Satan," He cried. And then came the test of the soul, put in the most crafty way. Those days had brought illumination! The Voice at the baptism



THE HILL OF BLOOD

Land will give bread "to Valley of Achor For a door of hope."

Even after the winter rains there is little water in the brook, and the vegetation is stricken and starved. While the plain is gay with flowers, only the thorn and the prickly scurvy grass find this arid soil. The sun beats into this country in the heat of the earth with tropical vehemence; the whole gorge has a sinister and forbidding aspect.

It was into this absolute waste that our Saviour entered, and for forty days and nights was away from human companionship. The Evangelist commences the temptation which assailed Him there — the three-fold temptation to lose His whole being, body, mind, and spirit. He hungered, we read. There was the cry of the physical — the need of the body; to which He replied, "Man shall not live by bread alone." Then came the temptation of ambition, — the lust strong mind, which could "see the kingdoms of the world at a glance," must have seized in the possibility of ruling them, but did not waver for an instant. — "Get thee behind me, Satan." He cried. And then came the test of the soul, just in the most trying way. "How long had thou not illumination? The Voice of the Highest



had declared, "This is my beloved Son." "If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down from hence," came the suggestion. The body, the mind, and the spirit were tried and tested. Just how these temptations appealed to Him, we have only the hint and suggestion. What those long days of solitude meant, what those nights of prayer betokened, we know from the after years of His blessed ministry. From that time of isolation, from that time of absolute seclusion, He returned "in the power of the Spirit,"¹ to face the world.

We talk of the happiness of finding ourselves. Who that has lived at all has not had moments of blessed illumination, when in a flash a revelation has come, and we see relations, and realize conditions as never before? This quiet Lenten season should bring us some such moments,—should have for each one of us some of the fruits of solitude. We are each alone in the world,—as alone as if no other person existed. In the last analysis there is only God and one's self. Do not be afraid to realize this. No soul was ever exactly like ours before, or yet to be. It is by acknowledging this great and fundamental truth that power alone is attained. The

¹ Luke, iv : 1-14.

old discipline of fasting, to use the ancient words "mortified the flesh." We may think we are past that elementary method, but it is good discipline. Anything which we do from a sense of duty, like the exercise of any power, strengthens that sense. To forego some small pleasure for forty days for the sake of exercising one's self in sacrifice, not for the sake of any reward, or on the basis of accumulating credit in the celestial accounts, is a good exercise. People will say that life is full of necessary sacrifice,—why therefore make those that are not required? But for that very reason it is well to train the will, to prove to ourselves that we have command over the body with its constant demands. It is good to use hardness towards one's self. And at this season, when so many devout souls are turning afresh toward the Inner Light, it should be easy and joyful for each one of us to turn after our own fashion,—not doing our alms before men to be seen of them, remembering our Lord's injunction,—“But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret.”

Here in this busy life we cannot lay aside the daily round of duty,—that would be “to be

of a sad countenance," and "appear unto men to fast." But we can live our days with an ever-growing sense of living them with our blessed Lord. He had rocks and stones for His bed,—a cave sheltered Him from the pitiless sun by day and the chilling wind by night. All the externals are different, but we can enter into something of His Spirit. As with devout imagination we follow those days of testing, of temptation in the Wilderness, we may learn to know ourselves, we may find our places in His Kingdom. The Lenten season should mean that to us. We can each take a few moments every day for the contemplation of divine things. It is a season of birth and of promise. Already the springtime radiance is in the air,—and from such a season of devout thought the Dayspring from on High will have its birth in each humble heart.

Let us pray:—

Lord, we would follow in the footsteps of Thy blessed Son. Thou knowest how the things of this world appeal to us. Thou knowest the cry of our physical frames for ease, for comfort. Thou knowest the call of ambition, which falsely bids us stoop to gain our ends. Lord, all our

114 A BRIEF PILGRIMAGE

ends are in Thee. May we undertake nothing in which we cannot ask Thy companionship, nothing that we cannot offer to Thee. As we think of that temptation in the wilderness, may we rise above ourselves, and share with our blessed Redeemer His fast, that we may also be prepared for angels to minister to us. AMEN.



JERUSALEM — THE LAMENT



THE LAMENT

THE long ascent was ended, evening shed
Its softest light, and from Mount Olive's brow
The holy city stood before Him ; how
Fair, with temple crowned and garlanded
With massive walls. The sacrifice is led
Not only in the days of Abraham's vow
To Mount Moriah, but comes here and now
Upon the ass's colt with garments spread.
“Jerusalem,” the tender voice laments,
“That stonest those that come to thy release,
The slaughter of the Holy innocents,
The blood of martyrs make thy diadem;
If thou hadst known, e'en thou, Jerusalem,
The precious things belonging to thy peace.”

XI

JERUSALEM—THE LAMENT

And when he was come near he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! — LUKE, xix : 41, 42.

THE long, hard day's climb up from the plain of Jericho was ended. The morning blessing of blind Bartimæus, rejoicing in his sight, was already a thing of the past. The way stretched behind, bare and barren, over red-clay paths, with scanty grass, dry and sear, and bright spring flowers intermingled. Black ravens silently sailed the mid-air, ready to descend upon any sheep lost in the deep ravines of the bleak slope. The sun sank toward the west, still shining upon Mt. Pisgah, which seemed to rise as the little company of travelers rose on the mountain slope toward Jerusalem. The plain of Jericho and the Dead Sea faded into purple haze. Jesus went before them, we read, “and they were amazed ; and as they followed they were afraid. And he took again the twelve and began to tell them what

things should happen unto him.”¹ They were passing through the scenes of his active ministry. There by the Jordan John the Baptist’s voice had sounded and the Dove descended. He had lodged in Jericho, at the foot of that terrible wilderness of the Temptation. “To-day I must abide at thy house,” He had said to Zacchæus in his sycamore tree.² Up and up the path winds,—a path still infested with thieves, so that the modern traveler has a mounted guard. This was the gorge in which Jesus laid the scene of the parable of the Good Samaritan,—a wild cañon with soil of crimson clay around the black jagged rocks. A steep and rough way, a weary day’s journey.

Toward the end of the day Bethany is passed, the village of Martha and Mary. Here Lazarus lived, and here Jesus had given some foretaste of His own resurrection. From here St. Luke says He sent on the disciples for the ass upon which to finish His journey, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, “Behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”³ It was the one moment of triumph in all those full and crowded

¹ Mark, x : 32.

² Luke, xix : 5.

³ Zech. ix : 9.



THE MOSQUE OF OMAR

On Mount Moriah, the Site of the Temple

years. “The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God. . . . Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.”¹ And yet in the midst of this rejoicing, which must have touched His heart, “when he was come near he beheld the city, and wept over it.” There was the Holy of Holies,—the great temple crowning the top of Mt. Moriah, built over the place where Abraham took his son Isaac “into the land of Moriah,” to offer him “upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of,” the ancient chronicle says.² On the bare rock itself, which formed and still forms the central portion of the floor of the temple, behind the secluding veil was the Ark of the Covenant, with the tables of the law, and the books of Moses. All that was most sacred to the devout Jew was within the walls of that holy temple. It dominated the city, it was the culmination of all the glory of the world. Here Jesus Himself was taken as a tiny infant, and the aged Simeon blessed Him. Here as a lad He was found, “sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.”³ To it flocked the devout of all coun-

¹ Luke, xix : 37, 38.

² Genesis, xxii : 2.

³ Luke, ii : 46.

tries. A list of fifteen nationalities is given in the book of Acts, of those who came hither, to learn of the Jewish religion, to study the wonderful history, to worship the God of Abraham. From the slopes of Mt. Olivet the city rises built upon its hills,—now looking like a mediæval citadel with its massive walls and arched gateway. “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mt. Zion, the city of the great king.” But as Jesus came in sight of it, that spring evening so many years ago, He wept over it. “If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!” It was the goal of His final journey, the culmination of His life of service. We are told that when He was twelve years old He was taken up to the feast, and for the first time took the way from Nazareth in the north down the Jordan valley, and up the steep hills to Jerusalem. It is a distance of less than a hundred miles. A week’s walking journey, even with children in the party, would easily accomplish it. And here in the height and maturity of His powers He had made the journey for the last time, and beheld the city as a whole, stopping to contemplate it, before He entered it to be lost in its maze of tiny thoroughfares, and throngs of eager people.



THE WALL OF WAILING

“If thou hadst known the things which belong unto thy peace!”

Archæologists tell us that the Jerusalem of the time of Christ is some twenty or thirty feet below the surface of the ground. They are finding the ancient pavements, deep hidden in the earth. Two or three times has the city been absolutely overthrown, not “one stone left upon another” of its buildings. Solomon’s Temple stood on the very summit of the mountain. Nothing of that is left. The splendid dome of the mosque which has taken its place crowns the “dome of the rock,” a portion of the original summit some sixty feet long by forty feet wide, which is walled in, directly beneath the massive vaulting. This is the very summit of Mt. Moriah, regarded by both Jewish and Moslem tradition as the foundation stone of the world. This is where Abraham brought Isaac for sacrifice. This is one of the places unchanged in all the centuries, a bit of everlasting rock. The splendid dome above it rises to a height of nearly a hundred feet, and was built in the seventh century. Saladin restored it in 1189. Some of the pillars which support it are of the fourth century, and were taken from Christian churches. Solomon’s Temple has long been gone,— not one stone was left upon

another ; but this fine building, rich in mosaics and Eastern color, shows the magnificence of its site. As the temple was built on the top of a mountain there was not much level space for it, and so a great terrace was made, a stone-paved court stretching far out over the natural contour of the hill. This terrace is supported by stones, — enormous blocks about fifteen feet long, and three or four feet wide, laid one on top of another, and forming the retaining wall of the vast platform of the temple. Many of these stones are inscribed with Hebrew characters. In spring flowers grow from the crevasses between them, — great masses of mignonette and blue-eyed veronica. Here on Friday afternoons the Jews come. It is as near as they are ever allowed to their Holy Place. This is the Wall of Wailing. In the soft spring light the dark-robed figures crowd and press against the precious stones, saluting them with kisses, and laying hands of blessing upon them. With a swaying motion in rhythm with the chanted hymn the men in their long cloaks and flowing head-dresses move gently to the sound of the Reader's voice : —

“ Because of the Palace which is deserted ” —

And the people answer, —



THE WALL OF WAILING

Showing Hebrew Inscriptions

“ We sit alone and weep.
Because of the Temple which is destroyed
We sit alone and weep.
Because of the walls which are broken down,
We sit alone and weep.
We beseech Thee have mercy on Zion,
And gather together the children of Jerusalem.
Make speed, make speed, O Deliverer of Zion ;
Speak after the heart of Jerusalem.”

If thou hadst known,—if thou hadst known the time of thy visitation ! Then, indeed, would Jerusalem not be a Moslem city, as it is at this day.

We are just in the season of Mid-Lent,—not only the commemoration of the forty days' fast in the wilderness, but the days of preparation for the supreme sacrifice. The older church observed them as days of special penitence and prayer. Is it not a time for us each to regard our own life, as far as possible from the outside, to try to see it as a whole, as a city that is built on a hill,—to note its bulwarks and foundations ? It is a time of question and also a time of worship. For the eyes of the soul are opened by noble worship, by the devout contemplation of divine things. Our Saviour wept because the Holy City knew not the time of its visitation. Now may be our time of renewal, our time of birth.

Each soul has its holy city, deep hidden under the accretions of every-day life. These are the days consecrated by the devout usage of centuries to make new beginnings, to build afresh, to seek divine things. Externals should drop away, and the eternal realities become living and vital. There are but two, God and one's own soul.

And the tender voice comes to us, out of the silence : " If thou hadst known — if thou hadst known the things which belong unto thy peace." Let us heed it, — let us turn with joy to answer, " Lord, Thou knowest all things ; Thou knowest that I love Thee ! "

Let us pray : —

O Thou who didst weep over the Holy City, Thou good shepherd who dost search for one sheep that is gone astray, we come to Thee asking for Thy care, longing for Thy guidance. Thou knowest, O Lord, that the path to the shrine in our hearts is blocked by many petty cares, a narrow and devious way. Come, we beseech Thee, with Thine own cleansing and renewing might. Open the way, enlarge our hearts, fit us for thine indwelling Spirit. We bless Thee that Thou dost make Thy home with the hum-

ble,—that Thou dost call us each by name. Sun of Righteousness, shine upon us. Give us, we pray Thee, the things that belong unto our peace! For Christ's sake. AMEN.





JERUSALEM—THE TRIUMPH



EASTER

TRIUMPHANT morn whose first ray had such might
That Life and Love, which passed beyond the ken
And ministering care of mortal men,
Upon this holy day could reunite!
O blessed sun, which saw the wondrous sight,
The glad re-birth of primal time, as when
The radiant sons of morn in thousands ten
Rejoiced at that great word, Let there be Light.
The first word when the tomb was newly rent
Was to a grieving woman gently said;
With two sad men He walked, the day far spent,
And how their heavy hearts within them burned
As comforted into the inn they turned.
And He was known to them in breaking bread.

XII

JERUSALEM — THE TRIUMPH

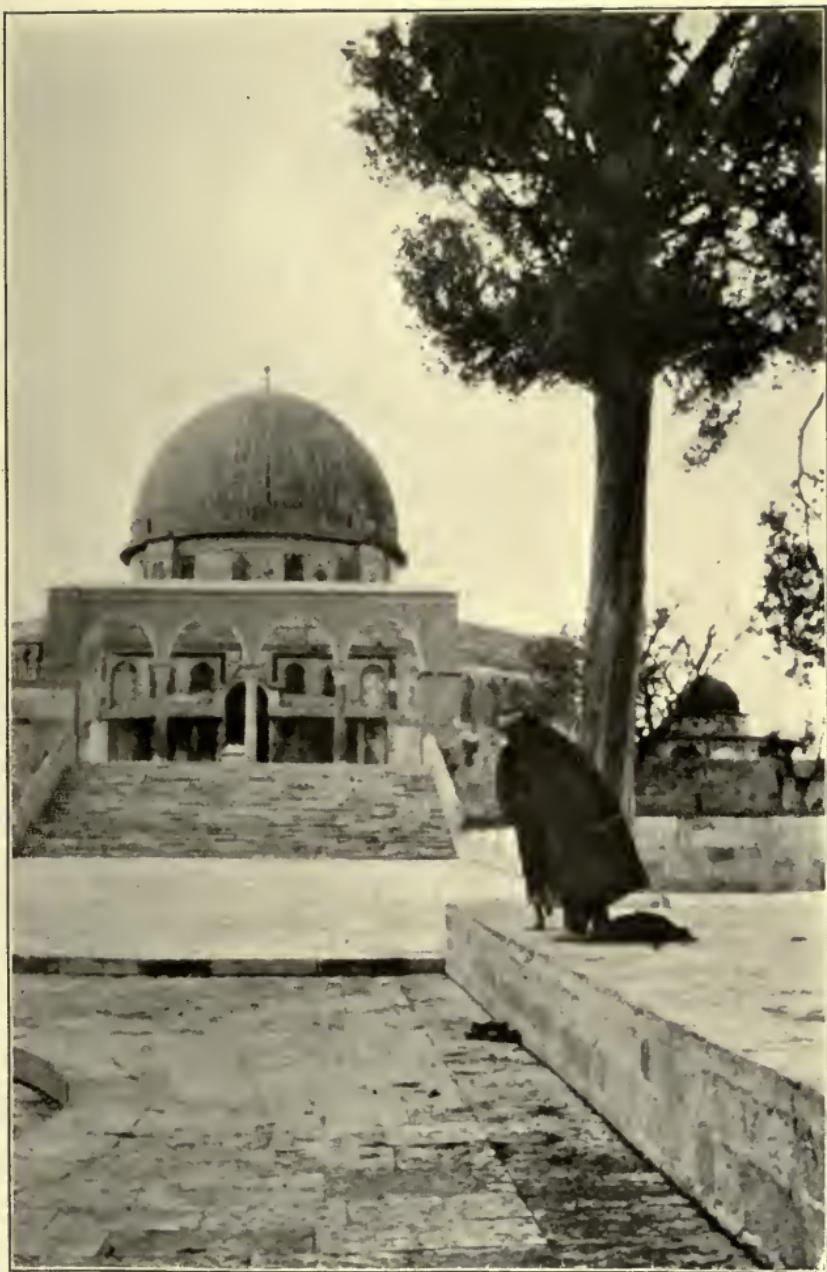
Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life. —
JOHN, xi : 25.

THE people of Israel have always been distinguished by the honor which they paid their women. Miriam, Moses' sister, is called the Prophetess, and we have her song of triumph, when she took a timbrel in her hand and led the song of rejoicing. Deborah ruled as a judge in the days when the tribes were settling the whole country. But it remained to that little group of women who followed Jesus from Galilee and ministered to Him, to achieve the supreme honors of the world. Mary, the mother of James and Joses; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; Salome, who, the commentators think, was the mother of Zebedee's children, James and John; Jesus' own mother, who, one of the evangelists declares, stood by the cross of Jesus; and Mary Magdalene, whom all four gospels mention as being there,—this group of Jewish women have received the reverence of Christian centu-

ries. Wherever Easter Day is celebrated, the love and devotion of these women are had in tender remembrance.

The Jews are peculiar among Eastern nations in holding women in higher regard than their neighbors do. No veils hide the women's faces; Jewish history abounds in instances of strong and fine womanhood. Some of the most wonderful of the conversations of Jesus were held with women. The conversation with the woman of Samaria by the well, one cannot miss from the Gospel story, for it was to her that He declared, "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." And it was to her that He spoke of the water "springing up into everlasting life."¹ It was to Martha that Jesus spoke those blessed words, of comfort to every grieving soul,—words which are the very centre and substance of the Easter joy,—"I am the resurrection, and the life." The deepest and the tenderest of His teachings was first given to a grieving woman. Is it any wonder that the women in the crowded Jerusalem streets called down blessings upon Him, or that the little company of His own friends came as near as the Roman soldiers permitted; and that after the day of pre-

¹ John, iv : 14.



THE OBEISANCE
A Father teaching his Son

paration very early in the morning they came to the sepulchre with precious spices, to do all they could to testify to their devotion?

Let me try to picture the place to you as I saw it. It must be greatly changed by this time, without doubt. Jerusalem itself is not the same city ; it has been conquered and razed to the ground and rebuilt by Roman and Crusader and Turk ; but the country itself must retain something of its primitive features. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, as we see it at present inside the walls of Jerusalem, was built by the Crusaders in 1103, but includes the older chapels which were rebuilt in 1037 on the sites of the earlier chapels which Constantine had erected as early as 335. Constantine's first buildings were destroyed by the Persians and rebuilt, and again in the tenth century were partly destroyed by fire, and ruined by the Moslems in the eleventh. The present church as it stands was built by the Crusaders, and Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin I are both buried within its walls.

The centre of this vast group of buildings, which belong to the Latins, Greeks, Armenians, and Copts, is a little shrine, which is built over what has for centuries been considered the Holy Sepulchre. This lies within a small chapel only

twenty-six feet long by eighteen feet broad, under the very middle of the rotunda. There is a vestibule to the east called the Angel's Chapel, in the centre of which is a part of a stone said to be the stone which was rolled away from the mouth of the tomb. This rotunda is common to all the Christian sects, and opening into it are the various other churches and chapels,—the Chapel of the Copts, the Chapel of the Syrians, the great Greek Church and the Latin Church. Underneath these churches are other chapels,—the Armenian Chapel of St. Helena, which dates from the seventh century; and farther down is the Chapel of the Finding of the Cross. The legend is a touching one, for the Empress believed that she was divinely directed to this spot, and she herself watched the digging, until three crosses, with the nails, the crown of thorns, and the superscription were found. It remained, then, to identify the true cross, and this was done by taking the three crosses to the bedside of a holy woman who was dying. The story is that, as soon as the real cross touched her, she was immediately restored.

It is a vast collection of buildings, rich with all that wealth and devotion can bring to beautify and to decorate; precious marbles of price

abound, hanging lamps are perpetually burning before all the holy places, and to this wonderful church from the very earliest time thousands of pilgrims have come believing that they saw the very place where our Lord was laid in the grave.

Easter Day is the greatest festival, and the church is thronged ; but Turkish soldiers stand all about the central shrine,— a slouching, unkempt crowd of little men, with dark faces and sharp, bright, roving eyes. They are to keep peace among the rival sects of Christians. Shame on us that it should be so ! Mass is celebrated early in the Roman Church, and the Archbishop of Jerusalem, with his attending clergy and acolytes, all robed in gorgeous brocade and scarlet, make a solemn procession around the Holy Sepulchre, swinging censers and chanting the ancient hymns of the church. There are many devout pilgrims to whom this is a real act of worship ; but the presence of the soldiery seemed to me so incongruous as almost to rob the service of any true significance. It was more like a wonderful pageant.

The Greek Church celebrates its Easter Day later, as they still use the old calendar, and conflicts between the two branches of the church have not been unknown. During the procession

no women are allowed on the floor of the great building. We looked down from a little gallery that one has to reach by a tiny dark stairway. It is roofed in, with arched openings like the front of an opera box, and the whole thing seemed like a great performance. One almost forgot the religious significance in the close, incense-scented atmosphere; and in the enormous building crowded with every nationality there did not seem much of the renewal of life and the recognition of the oneness of life that is the great message of Easter Day. One longed for air and sunshine and spring uprising, and it was a comfort to be told that of late years the best scholars are of opinion that this place within the walls was probably not the site of that garden tomb which gave its shelter to that Blessed Body. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate,"¹ the writer of Hebrews declares. This site must always have been within the limits of the city, according to the archæologists, and it is, therefore, outside the gates of the city that the devout imagination of modern scholars has discovered the real place of suffering to which the pilgrim must go.

¹ Hebrews, xiii : 12.

This is a hill fitly called “Golgotha,” the place of the skull. It is easy to form the great cracks which seam its precipitous banks into a death’s-head. A wide cavern marks the place of the nostrils, a gaping mouth is there, and the sightless eyes look from two hollows near the top. The Garden of Gethsemane is near its foot. There are the olives a thousand years old at least, close descendants of those that sheltered the agony and heard the prayer. Their enormous twisted trunks stand gnarled and gray in the spring sunshine, with the shimmering silver leaves still fresh and lace-like about them. The ground is covered with a tiny crucifer, a cross-flower blooming in pale violet, and turning pure white, a carpet of tinted snow. A gentle-faced Franciscan — a follower of that sweet St. Francis who, according to the ancient legend, received the stigmata himself — tends the garden, and when one rises from one’s knees he offers of his treasures to the devout visitor. Here lay the three weary Galileans, devoted to their Master, but worn with the grief and excitement of the day, and here under just such great olive trees came the reproachful voice to them, — “Could ye not watch with me one hour?”¹ And after the trial was over it is

¹ Matthew, xxvi: 40.

to this hill one must believe that He was brought. "And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha."¹ "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden," St. John tells us, and "a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid."² It is all here, still an open place outside the walls, and the rock-hewn tomb is still intact.

What a morning that was those centuries ago, when the women who had watched it all came, eager for the last loving service they could render! "While it was yet dark," "Very early in the morning," the accounts say. And the stone was rolled away, and the Life was living! Those beautiful words had taken on meaning: "I am the resurrection, and the life," He had said to a sorrowful woman, grieving for her brother's death, beside his tomb. And now some echo of them must have sounded in these women's ears as in perplexity they paused with their task unfulfilled. "And they remembered his words," St. Luke tells us, as the Angel asked them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Mary the mother of James, "and other women that were with

¹ John, xix : 17.

² John, xix : 41.



IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

them,"' to whom these first Easter tidings were given. The men could not believe them: "Their words seemed to them as idle tales."

It must always be one of the glories of womanhood that truth can appeal in a direct and concrete form to her mind; that there is a higher and purer form of apprehension than any process of reasoning. The power of love gives this mental clearness; and so to this company of women came the new revelation of the unity of life, of the oneness of the life that now is, and the life to come. This is the Easter Message, this is the Easter Joy. As our blessed Lord lived a man's life, so He died a man's death, and so He entered into a man's fruition. He was the well-beloved Son, and He was the Son of Man. Under these Syrian skies, here on the outskirts of Jerusalem, with the same Paschal moon watching in the heavens, and the same sun shrouding its light by day, that drama of the world took place, and the most magnificent utterance of any human lips was fulfilled, "I am the resurrection, and the life."

Let us pray: —

O Lord give us the eyes of faith, we beseech Thee, that turning from grief, and the things of

* Luke, xxiv : 10.

this world we may see Jesus. He was wounded for our transgressions, the chastisement of our peace is upon Him. May it not be in vain for us, dear Lord. He, having tasted death for all men, alone can bring us life. May we take it with thanksgiving, living with new fullness, with new gladness, because of our blessed Master's triumph. Make us one with Him, in the joy of this Easter Day, knowing that whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall never die. AMEN.

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